



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 143 – Finding Opportunity in Life Transitions with Dawn Jarvis
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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 the last year, I have been woodshedding. Woodshedding is a term used by musicians that means to rehearse relentlessly. Jazz musicians take it one step further as a way of honoring the hard work done in private to develop the chops needed to play flawlessly with others in public.

In my case, my self-imposed professional isolation was so I could create my first online course offering. It's only been a few days since its debut and I'm feeling a little like a proud parent, both exhausted by the birthing process, yet at the ready to share as much as I can about my newborn.

What I wanted to share today was the audio from a masterclass webinar that I offered last week to kick off the course launch. I should mention that the course is



called, *From Type A to Type Be, How to Mindfully Descend the Corporate Ladder and Invite What's Next*. It's about the journey from head to heart that's available to us as we transition from long-term careers.

But this conversation is more than just about post-corporate life. It's about finding the opportunity in major life transitions to live differently, to live in alignment with who you truly are, to live wholeheartedly.

My trusted companion in this conversation is Dawn Jarvis, a former nurse turned entrepreneur, who is amazing as you'll soon hear as she shares her life experiences, as I do mine.

About two-thirds of the way through, I share a bit about the course and I encourage you to listen through to the end. Let's just say we wrap up on a high note.

I'll put links to the video version of this conversation in the show notes, as well as where you can get more information on the course. And, of course, you're always welcome to send me a note at info@athenawellness.com. You know I love hearing from you.

And now onto the show. I hope you enjoy the conversation and find it inspiring.

[00:03:01] Kathy: All right, well, welcome everybody. My name is Kathy Robinson and I'm so glad you're here today.



For those who know me and I sound a little off, I had a really good time at the beach last week. [chuckles] My voice may go in and out, but my capable host, who I'd like to thank, Dawn Jarvis, for being here is going to be my wing person.

Once Dawn introduces herself in a bit, you'll see that you are in capable hands. Along with the many talents that she has, she's a very wonderful podcast host and she's very good at what she does. So thank you Dawn for joining us today.

So I'm going to start us off by telling you a bit more about myself, I'll give you an overview of how we'll spend our time together, and then I'll turn it over to Dawn and she can get us started.

First, a little about me. I'm the founder of Athena Wellness, a company that helps people holistically reinvent themselves at midlife. As you may know, Athena was a Greek goddess who signified both strength and wisdom, two qualities that I help my clients access in themselves. I focus on online education through the Athena Wellness Academy, I host the Athena Wellness Podcast, and I've written a book called *The Athena Principles: Simple Wellness Practices for Overworked Professionals*.

And being an overworked professional was something I knew a little about because I wasn't always in the wellness business. In fact, I spent over 30 years in corporate America, the first 18 years on Wall Street and the last 15 years for a Fortune 250 company, where I was the Chief Audit Executive and the Chief Risk Officer.



Over the years though, I became so passionate about wellness, wellness was my release valve when I was a professional. And I found that I felt fitter in my fifties than I did in my thirties, so much so that I became a certified wellness coach and started Athena Wellness because I wanted to help others navigate their own wellness and life transitions. And that's what we'll be talking about today. How to help you prepare for and navigate your post-corporate life.

So here's what we'll be talking about today:

- Once Dawn introduces herself, we'll share what surprised us most in our post-corporate journey.
- Then I'll give you some quick wins that you can implement today by sharing some actionable takeaways from my class, *From Type A to Type Be, How to Mindfully Descend the Corporate Ladder and Invite What's Next*.
- I'll provide recommendations for those who are still working in the corporate world as well as for those who have already left.
- Then I'll share a bonus offer for those who are interested in learning more about the course because I'll be facilitating a live experience of the course in September.
- We'll answer your pre-submitted questions.
- And then we'll wrap up on some closing thoughts on how to reimagine post-corporate life.

Wherever you find yourself in your life journey today, my intention is to have you leaving here feeling uplifted and feeling inspired and feeling like your best years are ahead. So with that, let's begin. Dawn, please, introduce yourself.



[00:06:18] Dawn Jarvis: Hi everybody. It's an absolute pleasure to be here. My name's Dawn Jarvis. I am a registered nurse and I retired from my job as a corporate nurse and I have been nursing for 35 years. I was laid off and I decided to take early retirement at the same time.

So what I do now is I have my own business, which is around diversity in healthcare consultancy. As Kathy said, I've got a podcast where I talk to people about their career journey. And I'm absolutely delighted to be here and to share Kathy's journey. Kathy has actually been on my podcast, but it's really good to see how she has utilized her experiences and is sharing that with other people to help them.

One of the things that surprised me, and I'll also go back to this a bit later, is what a transition moving into retirement is at that life stage. It was something that I never really thought about. So I'm really looking forward to what Kathy has to say.

That's my introduction and shall we go straight into it, Kathy?

[00:07:36] Kathy: Let's do it. Absolutely.

[00:07:39] Dawn: So one of the questions that I ask on my podcast, and I'm going to ask you too Kathy, is tell me a bit about your journey, and particularly about the journey when you made that decision to retire. Was it a planned thing or did it come up all of a sudden? Just talk us through what actually happened when you made that decision.



[00:08:04] Kathy: Absolutely, yeah. The answer, like many things in life, is yes and no. Planned in that I started thinking about it when I turned 50, knowing that the math would work in my favor when I turned 55, that I could retire. I would have the years in age and I would have the years with the company. And so it was this fun time of experimentation and I'm going to talk about that in a bit, on how you can use that time like a parallel to track.

I had two reporting lines in the company that I worked for, as the Chief Audit Executive I reported directly to the board, to the Audit Committee Chair, and also to the Corporate CFO. And within a month, right after my 54th birthday, both gentlemen said that they were planning on retiring.

And I knew instantly in that moment that I just didn't have it in me after 33 years to reestablish myself under new management. I really enjoyed working for who the replacement would've been at the board level, I knew her well. But the new person for the CFO, there was a long search, I didn't even know who that person was. And without even knowing a name, I just knew I didn't have it in me.

So yes, it was planned, I was thinking about it. But I thought I'd be able to pull that trigger when I was 57, when I was 60, when I was 62. And at 54, I was like, "You've got to get serious about this." And so I decided that when I hit 55, I was going to retire.

How about you, Dawn? What was your journey like?



[00:09:38] Dawn: Wow, that's really interesting. I know Kathy, we did a course together and we're in a mastermind together, and I did not know that you decided to retire at 55. So that's amazing to hear.

I had thought, like you, when I turned 50, I thought about, "How do I want to spend the rest of my career," and, "What do I want to be doing?" And I think retirement is quite a loaded word, isn't it?

Actually, retirement wasn't on my mind. As a nurse in the UK, you can retire at 55, and my plan was to work up to that and ease my way out and sort of think about what I was going to do. But I wasn't going to retire, I was going to leave the service I was working in and do something else. I wanted to start my own business.

So what actually happened for me is we had a large reorganization and retirement became an option. And it wasn't something that I've thought about before at all. In my head, obviously, I had some assumptions about what that meant and how I would be spending my life.

One of the things I want to share with you guys is that still, I suppose, retirement means... Well, what does it mean? Does it mean you're walking by the beach? Does it mean, I haven't got a partner, are you with a partner? Are there grandchildren, which just horrifies me, I'm not at that stage in my life.

I was like you, I had enough years, it was an option and it became the right thing to do, but it had a lot of feelings. I was with my feelings, shall we say, Kathy. And I wasn't expecting that. Maybe because it came from nowhere. And I think some of



the things that you maybe you'll talk about in your course and in the work that you do, is that we don't think about that. Do we need to prepare earlier and think about how we're going to spend that stage of our lives?

So I think particularly working in corporate, you're so busy that you're not really thinking about those things. But things could come from left field, whether it's the time or your health or your circumstances. So I think it'd be really good to prepare for that.

[00:12:08] Kathy: So why don't we get into some of the surprises? Even though we both sort of prepared and we were thinking about it, I think we've both been up-ended a bit. So let me get into it. There were three things that came to mind as I was thinking about this. And I'm already sensing some themes emerging just in what you said and what your experience has been.

Here are my three. First is, it will feel different than expected. Everyone around you is still in their own rhythm. They're going to work, everything is the same for them, but yours, your life has changed and has been interrupted in ways that even though you've planned for it, there's no way of knowing what that's going to feel like on the other side.

There's an identity loss, even if you weren't fully aligned or didn't fully identify with your profession. As an example, there are people that I'm sure you know, they're the doctors, they're the lawyers, they're the people that that's how they lead in life.



If I did that as the Chief Audit Executive, I'd have no friends, right? [laughs] So, it's like, it wasn't something that I would lead with in conversation of, "Hey, I'm a Chief Audit Executive." I didn't have that strong identity. But that said, I was still part of a 60,000 person organization. I was still part of corporate America. And you lose that identity when you walk out the door for the first time. That's the first thing.

The second thing is that the way forward, even if you think you have a path, it's not evident. You have to find your way and I wasn't expecting that. Metaphorically, it's what I call this path from head to heart because the answers aren't linear. They're not logical and that was my skill set. I could think my way out of something. You mentioned the word before, you were feeling the feelings. This is a time where you have to feel your way forward. And that's certainly something that I had to learn.

The third thing is the process mimics nature. A metamorphosis, if you will. And it's subtle. It happens slowly each day. And it's also miraculous, like the caterpillar turns into the butterfly. You're in the middle of this big transformation process, but the incremental change can feel like it's happening very slowly.

So those were some thoughts that I had. Does anything there resonate or is there anything that you'd like to add to that, Dawn?

[00:14:37] Dawn: Absolutely. It all resonates. All of what you said resonates. Particularly, the journey and people being in their own rhythm, because people are doing what they are doing. I had friends who are a little bit older than me that retired before I did and one of the things I noticed was their change in pace. People I used to speak to every day, there was a difference in timing on when we



would get together and how that would be because the amount of time they had was different.

One of the things I wanted to add is that I was shocked by how I wanted to mark it, mark my actual leaving as a, not necessarily a celebration, but sort of a recognition of my years in the health service. And what was interesting, so I retired during the pandemic and everybody started working at home. Things were very, very different. We were in crisis mode. So I didn't have a party. I didn't have that recognition and I still feel a weight about that. And I was surprised about how important that is to me because I know that from some of the work I've done that actually recognizing and celebrating success is quite important and reflection on your career is important too.

Then the last thing I would say is how the identity piece that you mentioned. I spent my entire working career with my identity as a nurse. I still do, but I did that consciously to help me manage the transition. That might change for me. But the way that I was able to maintain some semblance is that, yes, I'm retiring from this job, but I'm still in my identity, it's still there and I'm still working through how I actually do that. And depending on what you want to do when you retire, I think that's one of the things you need to think about.

What resonated with me was like you said, I can say I'm a nurse, I'm a doctor. You didn't feel that. You could say I'm a Chief Audit Officer and then what are you going to say when you're retired? You can say I'm Kathy, I'm amazing, obviously, but the importance that we place on titles is quite a thing to think about. How do



we describe ourselves? What are we? I didn't realize I know how important that was.

So, we have talked about some of the surprises that we have both gone through. I think people in the audience, people watching this, they'd be thinking, "So yeah, I can see that, but how do you manage? How do you prepare? What can you do proactively to support yourself when you're going through this process?" What would you say, Kathy?

[00:17:56] Kathy: Yeah. So, I'm a big fan of practices. And so what I thought I would do is give some suggestions for those who were still in corporate and for those who have already left. And I'll pause, and Dawn, I'll get your thoughts on if there's anything else that you would add or if there's anything that resonates for you, as I'm talking about this.

The reason why I'm a big fan of practices is that they're really just simple actions that we do for the purpose of learning and growing and experiencing, so having a new experience. In our case, it's learning how to shift from our default settings.

One of the things that I found is that coming out of corporate, there are deep behavioral grooves that have just been embedded in us. You don't even realize it. So we default to this and it's hard to get into our natural rhythms. For me, I didn't even know what my natural rhythms were. My coffee pot used to go off at like 3:45 in the morning. Whether it was my natural rhythm or not - it's not - that's what used to happen.



So how do we get into how we're wired? And that can be unsettling, because we may not know. So practices are just a safe way for us to be able to experiment. And the suggestions do vary.

So let's start with folks who are in the planning phases, as Dawn and I were way back when we were 50 and we were pondering what retirement might be like, what post-corporate life might be like. So the question, and I love holding questions, the question that was a game changer for me was, "How do I want to spend my time?"

Until I was 50 years old, believe it or not, I never asked myself that question. It sounds really sad to me now, but my life was too structured to even entertain it, like that felt like a luxury. But it became a crucial question as I began to think about, "What do I want the second act of my life to be like? What do I want to be involved with?"

And I found my answer by looking at the media that I was consuming. What was I reading, what was I listening to, what podcasts were I listening to.? And they were all things about healthy eating and endurance sports at the time, writing, creativity, spirituality played a big part, simplicity, nature, to name a few.

When I stepped back, I found that this all had to do with wellness, with living a good life. And so I followed that trail and while I was still working my corporate job, I studied to become a wellness coach, created Athena Wellness, and in that last year, while I was still employed, I started blogging and writing my book. So things



that didn't interfere with my career, but like a parallel track to get me ready, almost like having training wheels.

So with that mind, I would invite you to ask yourself the same question, "How do you want to spend your time?" And knowing that it's not an easy question to answer, I would suggest a few ways to begin to experiment.

The first is to explore the times in your career when you felt in flow. The times when time just melted away. What activity just gets you lost? For me, I love putting together big puzzles and telling the story, which was perfect for what I did. What happened in this 60,000-person company last quarter? How do I get that down into a half-hour presentation for the board of directors? How do I synthesize all of this stuff? And it helped me in my life post-corporate.

Identify your key turning points, both professional and personal. For me, I couldn't run a lap around a track when I was in my 30s but I ran my first ultra marathon in my 50s. What was that story? That was all about wellness. So looking at that turning point helped me hone in on what really kept my interest over a long period of time.

Engaging with your heart to do things that you enjoy just to see where it leads. Are there activities you always wanted to try? In preparing for this talk, it made me remember, and it's been a really long time. When I was in college, I got voted most likely to become an entrepreneur. And then I went into corporate life for 30 years.



So what are some of the things that people have seen in you, years ago, decades ago, that maybe you didn't see back then? Is there something there that you want to get in touch with or start to play with again?

And then the last thing is to create a place to dream and to dream big. For me, I bought a little bullet journal, it was \$18 bucks, back in probably 2017. I started to keep notes of what Athena Wellness might be. But what it did, I look back at that now, and that's like pencil sketched blueprints for the life that I'm living today. So having a place that you can dedicate to jot down some of those thoughts would be a great way to get started.

The second practice, I say contemplation because meditation has a whole heavy thing around it, but I do something and I did something when I was in corporate called Hand Over Heart Breathing. And it was really simple. It was a place that I could connect with what I now call my stillpoint. I didn't know what it was when I was doing it back then. But when I was at my busiest, I was just yearning for a time where I didn't have to make a decision and nobody needed me, just five minutes of that a day.

The way you can do it, and this is how I did it, you wake up in the morning, you set your timer for five minutes, put your hand over your heart, stay in bed, get comfy, just be mindful and know that for the next five minutes, you don't have to make a decision and nobody needs you. And just be in that space. And gently remind yourself that there is nothing to do.



What that does is it gives you an access point to that Athena part of yourself, that wise part of yourself. And you'll find that things come to mind that maybe wouldn't come to mind when you're in the busiest parts of your day. So I also suggest keeping a notebook nearby just to see what might bubble up. But what you will find there is that over time, that time will want to expand. And so this just gives you a place that maybe you don't do it in the morning but maybe you take a walk on the weekends, and you start to connect with that part of yourself.

The last thing, the action, I wrote down: Try, try, try! This is a wonderful time of experimentation as you start to answer the question, "How do I want to spend my time?" - try things.

As an example, in those five years leading up to my retirement, I found that even while I was working, I was attracted to things like boot camp to keep in shape that led me to trail running. It led me to endurance sports. It led me to ultra-marathoning. It led me to culinary courses to learn how to prepare plant-based foods for athletes to help with recovery as I was getting older. And that led to a Google search on wellness coaching.

I think this is really important, over this whole period of time, I kept gauging, "How does this activity make me feel?" As an example, I knew I loved fitness and even though I entertained being a personal trainer, I didn't want to be tied to a facility that I had to show up to. Same thing with cooking. I love cooking, I love preparing healthy food. But to be a chef and have to report to work, I had done that for 30 years.



Where that landed me was I knew it gave me clarity that I wanted my business to be creative, to be lucrative so I could support myself, but also to be portable so I could work anywhere.

So this wonderful time of experimentation, as you ask yourself, how do you want to spend your time, give yourself this time and this gift. It really is a wonderful investment.

I'm just going to pause there. Dawn, is there anything that you would add to folks who are still in the work world who are contemplating what they might want to do next?

[00:26:07] Dawn: First of all, I want to say, that's amazing. I think what you've described is a period of reflection and what you like to do. I think that's really important. One of the first things you said was around how am I going to spend the second half of my life? And I think exploring like you have done, and you help people to do, is really good. What do you like doing? How do you like to spend that time?

I really like what you said about how does that make you feel, because I think it's an opportunity, isn't it really, about how you're going to do that and what you're going to do and looking at your talents. I think it's really important to look at what are your skills? What can you do well and how can you transfer that, whether you're going to do it in a business like we have, or whether you're going to do something else, which is about just how do you like to spend your time?



From my point of view, I did a similar thing. I'm not as structured as you, Kathy, but I looked at my skills and how I like to spend my time. I think one of the things that I would add to that is if you are a very, very busy person, there's going to be a transition into becoming a less busy person. Or if that's what you want to happen so that you can enjoy it.

I probably went from busy to still busy, but what I'm thinking about now, and what I would encourage people to think about, is this is a time that you can do the things that you enjoy. It doesn't have to be do, do, do all the time, although that is good, but what do you enjoy doing just for the sake of doing it, as well, to take that time. That's the only thing from my own experience that I would add to that.

[00:28:10] Kathy: All right, perfect. So let's help the folks who are already in their post-corporate phase of life. The question that I would suggest comes from a writer who is also a mentor of mine, her name is Christina Baldwin. Twenty years ago, she wrote a book called *The Seven Whispers*, where she explains how she found the connection to her inner guidance by posing two questions to herself. The first was, "What do you want me to do?" And the second is, "How do I need to change in order to do it?"

I find that this helps me when I'm feeling directionless, it brings me this sense of calm but it opens me to curiosity and a willingness to move toward something new. So you can try it while you're walking. I love doing that, when you walk and hold a question to see what comes up. Some days there may be silence and other days you may get an insight. But just like I suggested before, just make sure you



keep a pen and paper or your phone notes nearby, where you can capture your words of wisdom.

For the contemplation, I would suggest the same Hand Over Heart exercise, but with a twist. And that is being in liminal space, experiencing what it's like to be in liminal space just for those five minutes. And by liminal space, I mean the space in between two phases of life.

The word liminal actually comes from the Latin that means *threshold*, you're at a threshold of a new way of being. You're neither in the old space that's gone, but the new one isn't here yet. It's like standing in this doorway between two rooms where a new life awaits in the room that you're just about to enter. And so this threshold is an exciting place where you can experience this identity transformation, but it's also a place of not knowing, which can cause distress and anxiety. And as someone who was probably paid to have the answers all the time, this space of not knowing is new, it's a new place to be.

So I suggest the same Hand Over Heart breathing exercise that I outlined before, just with one change. Just relax, what I call "being in the goo," this liminal space of where your old identity is dissolved, you're no longer who you were, but it's unclear of who you're becoming just yet. Can you just relax in that space and just "be in the goo" and see what it feels like? What does it feel like to not know? To be okay with what's unfolding, of being in this formless state and inviting what's next?

And then the action, I would say, take one step, and you get an extra point if it does not make logical sense for you. This is important because we think that we



can't, I certainly was in this camp, "I can't move forward unless I have my whole plan laid out before me," that was really my MO, and I have found that that is not the case. In fact, one of my favorite quotes has become, it's a quote from poet Antonio Machado and he says, "Pathmaker, there is no path. The path is made by walking. By walking, you make a path."

And so what is the one step that you can take today? And here's the catch, it's the step that feels true to you. This was new to me as well, not because I had to do it, not because I was paid to do it, not because somebody expected me to do it, what's something I really want to do? And taking that small step in that way helps you align to this future self that you're envisioning at this point in your life. So I would suggest taking that small step, getting on with your day and tomorrow, taking another small step, and then just repeating that.

So Dawn, please, anything that you'd like to share there.

[00:32:17] Dawn: Again, I love this description of, "It's a journey." And also the time that you've detailed on both sides of the corporate space about taking time just to be and to contemplate. I love the "going through a threshold into a new you." And I particularly liked, because I am a person who does something intuitively, just taking that first step, but that step has to be what feels right for you because then you will be happy with it and comfortable with it. And I'm a great one, if it feels right, then do it, trust your intuition around doing it and actually taking that step will make things happen.



I know Kathy is quite a planned and structured person, so I'm really glad to hear that you didn't have to be to go forward. And I think that's something that people can struggle with, is that not knowing exactly what's going to happen but, for me, that's part of what's exciting. But I think for some people that can be quite anxiety provoking.

But what I'd like to share is this, is to acknowledge that. I like what you're saying about that hand over heart sort of thing, sort of experiencing it and going with it anyway and then you can see what happens. I really, really like that.

Did you discover this? I love this model. Has this been a thing that's come to you out since you've retired? Did you determine the process, because it's a lovely model. Tell us a bit about how you did it and what you're going to do with it.

[00:34:10] Kathy: I appreciate that. And it's funny because it feels like all those years that I was creating board presentations, I realized it was this similar process. I just changed the lens to taking a look at what I was doing. But when I created the course, which I'm going to talk about in a bit, I didn't realize that I was actually journaling my own-- I was actually outlining the process that I went through. But it wasn't until I was done that I was like, "Oh, that's what just happened to me."

It was this really odd. I think I was in this meta phase of like this metamorphosis was happening to me, yet I was trying to instruct others how to go through this process, not realizing that I was going through it myself. I don't know if that makes sense but that's actually how it unfolded.



[00:34:54] Dawn: Yeah, it makes perfect sense. One of the things that I did when I started my business and I started in not a very structured way and just went for it. And then somebody asked me how I did it and what I had to do was then reverse engineer it. So what actually were the processes that I did? What did I actually do? And similar to you, then things become clear. Things become clearer, actually.

Part of my business is around networking. And one of the things I discovered going through that is that I network quite naturally, but there is a process to it, there is a process to what I do. And I think, again, I've also realized being a nurse and asking people questions or getting information from people that don't necessarily want to give it to you, there's a process for doing it, a process for actually engaging with people, creating rapport, and that I can use those transferable skills in my business.

So there is a process that you go through. I really love that you talk about journaling, visioning and things like, that because when you go back over that work, and I did a similar thing, then you can start to join the dots and then it makes sense about what you need to do when you go forward. So I really, really liked that.

I would love to hear a bit about the course that you've developed?

[00:36:17] Kathy: I know, this is like a big reveal. Dawn is in this mastermind that we're in and I've been keeping things undercover so this is going to be a first reveal for you as well.



[00:36:27] Dawn: I'm very excited to see that because Kathy is a very planned and organized person. This is part of all of our journeys, really, isn't it, the people that are in our mastermind. So, let's see.

[00:36:39] Kathy: All right. Well first, why even create a course about mindfully descending the corporate ladder? And what I have found is that-- and I fell into this category as well --almost everybody plans for their financial future, but few plan for their future life. And even though I felt like I was doing that, I still didn't do it to the extent I could have.

So it takes time to truly consider how to find happiness and meaning outside of our long-time, successful careers. Happiness and meaning aren't found on bucket lists I've found, they're actually rooted in action and they're the result of living a purposeful, healthy lifestyle aligned with who you truly are at this stage of life.

There have been many articles that have been in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Times* of people who have retired and have gone back to work because they weren't prepared for this. It's a very tender space when an old identity is dropped so a new one can begin to take shape. And so what would it be like to be with others who don't know the old you, but are rooting and supporting the new you.

And that's why I created this course. It is really the one that I wish I had when I was considering retirement and navigating in this new world.

Throughout the course, students will work with four practices, the practices of contemplation, of journaling, of positive action, and of holding a question.



Students learn how to discern what's truly important to them at this stage of their lives. They give themselves permission to see things differently, to do things differently, and to be in this liminal space I've been talking about, without form. They get to question past assumptions with self-compassion, which is something that we practice, as they release what no longer serves them. They explore new activities and what it feels like to embody living from the heart, to take action by building habits to support their new identities and move in the direction of their envisioned future self, and to start ascending a new ladder of their choosing, if they choose, while learning to sustain their efforts and their wellness long term.

This is what I call the journey from head to heart, *From Type A to Type Be*. And so for the first time, I'm going to be offering this online course as a facilitated experience. Each week following the release of the video content, of the transcriptions and the worksheets and the audio files, I'll be holding a one-hour discussion, limited to six students. I'll have cohorts of six students, so it will be a small group. And these discussions will include some additional insight from me and then around a group coaching where we'll share the experience that we've had as we work through the material together.

The reason for the discount is, it's the first time I'm offering this and I'm looking for students who "are in," who are really excited about doing the work, and are looking forward to working with other like-minded folks. If you'd like to learn more all you need to do is point the camera on your phone to the QR code and it will bring you to Teachable, which is where the course is. You can see, take a look at the page



that gives the course overview, the curriculum, you can also have a sample of one of the lessons.

If you have any questions, you can send me a note through LinkedIn or through info@athenawellness.com, and I would welcome the opportunity to chat with you.

[00:40:12] Dawn: That's amazing. I'm just going to say, and I didn't clear this with Kathy before I did this, but if you've got any questions or any thoughts, put them in the chat. It's been really good to hear how Kathy went through her experiences pre and post corporate and the journey she's been on. It's been absolutely a privilege. I've known Kathy just over a year now, and to hear this journey and to get to this point, and I'm really excited about the course and the fruition of this work.

I'm going to ask you a question, Kathy. What do you think the main transformation people will get? Is it around having some more knowledge about yourself and planning? Is it talking to other students and sharing that community experience? What do you think are the benefits that people are going to get from doing this course?

[00:41:20] Kathy: I think the course material itself leads people through this metamorphosis and that's like the theme that goes through the class of the caterpillar to the butterfly. We have become really good caterpillars in our professional lives. When we put ourselves in the cocoon of retirement and we disintegrate into this goo of DNA that has the ability to become a butterfly, there's a process that we go through. And it's not by using the skills that we've used for decades. This requires a new set.



So, I think it's a new way of approaching life. I think it's much lighter. It's much more aligned. There's a sense of fulfillment. That I'm sitting here today, doing my work at home, like that has not gotten old. So the technology is here for us to make an impact in the world. We can do anything now. And it excites me, on the back end of the course, once people go through this, there's going to be an opportunity for us to gather as people now who want to make a difference in the world.

I'll talk a little bit about this at the end of what the possibilities are when we harness our experience and our wisdom and focus it out into the world for people who need it. That's what really gets me excited. So this class is really like a primer that we do this for ourselves first, but then what's on the other side of that? What can we do for the world and for others and to be of service in the world? That's what really gets me excited.

[00:43:02] Dawn: Fantastic. Thank you for that. Thank you for taking us through that. I love the metamorphosis into a butterfly. That's lovely. That ticks a lot of boxes for me.

We were going to do some questions now because you were very organized and asked for questions before we came to this webinar. Should I ask them or will you ask them?

[00:43:29] Kathy: Actually, what I did was I took them and I put them into three buckets. So maybe I'll tee up a bucket, I'll give you my thoughts, and then I'll turn it over and we'll take them one by one. I've got three buckets.



[00:43:40] Dawn: Okay, cool.

[00:43:42] Kathy: The first were the folks who were considering early retirement, but they were afraid of giving up a reliable paycheck. And I felt that pain. I'll tell you a story in a minute, but before I tell that story, the one thing that I would always preface this with is, please don't put yourself in financial peril ever. And to the extent that you can be your own patron and plan for this, that's not always possible, I understand that. But if you're in this place of, it doesn't seem like it's the right time, it may just not be the right time, but you can still plan and do all the things that we've talked about. It's not wasted time, it's investment time. So I would preface my comments with that.

But that said, you've heard enough of my story now that I can tell you, about a month before I told my boss that I was going to make it official, I was going to retire, I was getting ready for work and I became paralyzed by fear, like gripped with fear. I just saw this reliable ATM machine that was working so well for 33 years. Anytime I needed to go to that ATM machine I could. And that was going away.

I just had this moment of, "Are you out of your mind?" My mom had passed about a year before and I could hear her like, "Are you crazy?" She grew up during the depression. "Are you crazy doing this?" kind of a feeling.

But with that, I started to think about what I was doing because I was already planning for Athena Wellness. And I asked myself, "If you were going to make your first hire, who would be?" And I realized that, it would be me, who was my first hire, right? So, okay, it would be you and you have this uncertain work situation, but you



don't know with certainty what's going to unfold, but you feel like you've got your first good first step there. What are you really afraid of?

And suddenly, this sense of calm came over me and that sense of calm never left. It was just this like, I knew that I couldn't go back, but I didn't know what was going to happen when I went forward, but I felt okay with that.

And so my suggestion then would be to allow yourself to have this back and forth. That went all the way up until the time when those words actually came out of my mouth. So to give yourself that time, try on these different scenarios, but until you hit that sense of calm again, if you have the luxury to do that some people that'll get to our next question, folks that don't have that luxury. But if you do have that luxury, it's okay to do this parallel path until you feel this sense of, you know what there really is no going back now, I have to go forward in a new way.

So that would be my suggestion for that question. How about you, Dawn?

[00:46:33] Dawn: This question resonates with me so much. Part of the planning was the planning for this time, which I didn't know when that was going to be. I was a mortgage slave. I was working in a job that I was quite well paid, but I didn't actually like that much. I think my contribution to that is to do the planning and wait for the opportunity. Because if you are doing the planning and thinking about how it's going to be, what it's going to look like.

I wasn't onboard with manifestation before all this happened, but actually, if you are doing the plan and you are imagining it and you know what's going to be like



then you'll be able to take the opportunity when it presents itself. And that's what happened to me. I got laid off and that gave me the opportunity to go forward with my dream to do that, but then saying that I had a backup plan. I have a profession and I know I'm privileged to have a profession, but I give myself and I still do this actually, I give myself six months time scales and I give myself outcomes that I want to achieve in those time scales.

The fall back position is if it doesn't work out, I can go back and get a job, or what will I do if things don't go to plan. And it hasn't happened yet. I think why it doesn't happen is because that's the nuclear option, it's going back into the health service. I don't want to do that so I do everything in my power so that doesn't happen.

So I think for people who are worried about where the next paycheck is coming through, and I agree with you totally, Kathy, don't, but make the plan. When the opportunity arises, things will come to you. One of the things I did is I had a plan to do things as a side hustle to test it out, to see how that would work in reality. And when the opportunity came to do it, I took that opportunity with both hands. And I'm not saying it wasn't with trepidation because it was. It's like, "So this is what you've been waiting for, Dawnie, crack on." So, that's what I would say.

[00:48:52] Kathy: All right. The second one was, I was packaged out. Sounds like what you were just mentioning. I was packaged out suddenly and feel lost. So this is someone who didn't have the opportunity.

First, I can only imagine. My heart goes out to this person, because while I have been in my own goo, I have often wondered what would it have been like if I was



just having a regular day at work and I was suddenly called into a conference room and that was it. My career was over in that day.

So my recommendation is this is a time to treat yourself as kindly as possible, to go through the inevitable stages of grief, to feel those unpredictable emotions, probably ones that maybe you don't want to feel, and give yourself the grace and the space to just be in it. This is one of those situations where you've been forced into the cocoon. You were put into one, you didn't wrap it around yourself. But now you have the choice of whether you want to give corporate or your professional life another go or if you want to do something else.

It could be really hard to make choices like that when you're hurting. So my suggestion would be to give yourself some comfort and to give yourself some time. If at all possible, to stay open to the extent you can to invite the bewilderment of not knowing. Again, a skill set that we're not great at, and get used to living with these open-ended questions. So I hope that was helpful.

Dawn, with your nurse practitioner background, is there anything you could do to help?

[00:50:35] Dawn: Yeah, I would totally agree that life throws these things at us, doesn't it really? I totally agree. It's a time for self care. It's a time to acknowledge what is the grief process that any change or transition that you go through that is part of it.



What I would add or supplement, it's not adding, is that I would acknowledge whatever sadness or whatever pain that you might feel about the situation. This happened to me. One of the things that helped me is to see what the opportunity is there to take out of what can be a difficult situation. It doesn't take away the difficulty, but I personally found that doing something positive that was part of some goals I had for myself helped with the situation.

I would also add this, if you're in this situation, the grief, because that is what it is, will come and go. That you need to come back to what Kathy said about looking after yourself and the self care that is required to get you through any difficult situation. This can be a difficult situation. So that's what I would say in addition to being happy.

[00:52:04] Kathy: Excellent. Then in the interest of time, because Dawn and I are sticklers for time and we're going to end on the hour, I'm going to take the last question since it feels more audit-related and then we'll give our closing remarks.

So the question was, I'm retired and have many interests, but I feel like I'm just filling my time and not contributing. To this person, I would say, my suggestion here is to think about what your intentions are for this time in your life. Are you looking to travel? Are you looking to make community impact, spend quality time with family? Do you want to do an activity that you love, a hobby? If you had all the money and time in the world, where would you be spending your time?

Then I would take an inventory of how you're spending your time today. What is it that you're doing? Rough estimates of where you're spending your time, especially,



I would pay attention to those times that are, "very sneaky time wasters," right? So are there times where you're spinning your wheels or doing things that you wouldn't do otherwise?

And then I would overlay those lists. How much of what you're doing right now is getting you to where you want to be? That's what I would look for. Then I would make adjustments accordingly.

So with that, I'm going to move to our closing comments. And Dawn, I'll invite you for your closing remarks.

[00:53:24] Dawn: Thank you, Kathy. Well, thank you so much for, first of all, sharing your journey and your experiences. I really love that it's about reimagining it, that it's not an end, it's a continuation of a journey. And lots that you said has resonated with me and in my post-corporate life and retirement. I think there's lots of different ways to do things. I really like how, Kathy, this is a time for self-reflection and thinking about what you want going forward. I think that's a positive thing. So thank you so much, Kathy, for that.

[00:54:06] Kathy: Appreciate that. Thank you so much for being here.

I wanted to close by saying that I recently wrote a blog post entitled *Retirement is a Verb*. And it was based on the story of a lawyer who, in 1965, donated one hour of pro bono legal time each week, after being enraged by an injustice he witnessed on the evening news.



The man who was telling the story was the recipient of the lawyer's work and grew up to be an Ivy League scholar and an athlete and today serves as a US Senator.

And it made me wonder what might be possible if we harness this energy. What if we put our time and attention into what Steven Covey calls The Circle of Influence, on things that we have the ability to take action on? The more we focus on what we influence, the more change and impact we can have. And that's the power that we can have as we embark on this new phase of life.

Conversely, what a disservice it would be if we don't offer up our experience and our wisdom to those who can benefit.

So, how will you choose to repurpose your time that you once devoted to your career? How can you best leverage your lifetime of experience and talent that you've honed for decades?

Just one hour of a week changed the trajectory of a person's life. And you can do the same. By staying in this Circle of Influence, not only will it expand, but it's been found that it actually enhances your own well-being and positivity and optimism and radiance.

So I will leave you with those thoughts. Retirement is a verb. And the world needs your experience and wisdom. And I can't wait to see what you do out there.

I want to thank Dawn Jarvis for being such a generous and gracious co-host. And I want to thank you. It has really been a privilege to spend this time with you. And



both Dawn and I hope that you will keep in touch. Please feel free to reach out. Thank you so much for your time.

[music]

[00:56:26] 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.

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Until next time, be well! [music]

[00:57:29] [END OF AUDIO]