



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 144 – Pondering the Universe From a Beach Chair
August 10, 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.

Last month, I spent some time at one of my favorite beaches with some of my favorite people, including my twin great nieces who are five years old. Everything is a wonder and a delight at that age. It's miraculous to witness the world through their eyes.

Around that time, humankind got some new eyes as well. Infrared ones that are attached to a \$10 billion, multi-decade project named the James Webb Space Telescope or JWST. The initial images that were shared mid-July were stunning and just a taste of what's to follow.



It gave me a lot to ponder as I sat on my beach chair looking up at the unobstructed sky. Somewhere above me, the JW observatory floated a million miles away as it orbited around the sun. And three things came to mind:

1. Audacious dreaming. This effort took three decades and collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Canadian Space Agency. But the human coordination is only part of the equation. Last year, NASA engineers said that after lift-off, "the most complex sequence of deployments ever attempted in a single space mission" would begin.

In order to get such high-resolution images, the telescope mirror had to be large, too big to be carried on a rocket. And so began an engineering adventure, where scientists constructed an origami design to allow the hexagon mirrors and the sunshield to fold and unfold, resulting in over 300 single points of failure.

Miraculously, the 344 steps flawlessly unfolded, as did its mirrors. In short order, the infrared eyes began scanning areas of space and returning detailed images never seen by humans. But the audacity of the dream and the courage to strap three decades worth of work to a rocket fueled by explosives and launch it into space boggles my mind.

2. Universal understanding. The main objective of the JWST mission is two-fold: The first is to explore our cosmic origins from an external perspective by studying star and galaxy formation and implosion in the earliest of times. The second is to look internally by gaining a new perspective on our own galaxy by studying star birth closer to home.



We now have front row seats to witness this cycle of life, from star birth to star death, and the intermingling of galaxies in a gravitational dance. We are watching the chemistry of life, the reprocessing of elements like oxygen, hydrogen, carbon – all of the stuff we're made of – the building blocks of life, forming new stars and planets as part of this galactic recycling.

3. Cosmic depth. My favorite picture release so far was the first one, the Deep Field image that resembled a Jackson Pollock painting. It's looking into deep space for cosmic dawn, the beginning of time, when the first starlight began to illuminate the Big Bang darkness. We're collectively looking at the past to understand our present and plan our future.

What fascinated me most was NASA's explanation that the "image covers a patch of sky approximately the size of a grain of sand held at arm's length by someone on the ground and reveals thousands of galaxies in a tiny sliver of vast Universe."

[00:05:19] Kathy: Shifting my gaze from the sky to the endless grains of sand all around me, I wondered, "Can these insights be mirrored by the depth we have inside ourselves?" After all, there are trillions of stars in the Universe and trillions of cells in our bodies, indeed an entire Universe within.

As humans, we have the capacity to turn our gaze inward to try to see things we've never seen before in our own deep space, fueled by the same curiosity to discover our innermost mysteries. How do we extend our own range and go deeper?



It reminded me of a passage from a 2005 book by Eckhart Tolle called *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. This book was out for about 10 years before I picked it up. Toward the end of the book is a chapter dedicated to the discovery of inner space, where Tolle suggests maintaining a vantage point in life with that of an astronaut who paradoxically views the Earth as both precious and insignificant.

This analogy can be applied to everyday life. To keep such a perspective, we can choose to stay in conscious awareness and not get swept up in thoughts, emotions and the busyness of the day. Tolle suggests turning off the noise and tending your internal space. "Discover inner space by creating gaps in the stream of thinking. Without those gaps, your thinking becomes repetitive, uninspired, devoid of any creative spark, which is how it still is for most people on the planet."

There are a number of ways he recommends doing this ranging from turning off the media to working with addictions to breathwork--simple suggestions that can be difficult to consistently practice. But the rewards are exponential. What feels like emptiness at first turns into a rich landscape of consciousness. It's in this energetic space where we can imagine and bring our dreams into form. A place where it's possible for the inner and outer Universes to merge into an integrated field of energy, of Oneness.

As the waves rolled in, I wondered how I might be able to invite this deepening into my own life. And I returned home without a clear answer. But in the days that followed, I received an email from a friend who shared a book recommendation,



Listening Below the Noise: A Meditation on the Practice of Silence by Anne D. LeClaire.

I looked up the book online and smiled when I saw the cover, which was graced with a beachscape. Part memoir, part instruction manual, the book tells the story of a woman learning to detach from the daily noise so she could connect more deeply with herself. I ordered it immediately.

When the book arrived, I knew what my practice would be. Each morning for the month of August, I will spend an hour in silence, preferably outside. It's my intention to begin those hours sitting quietly or meditating. I'll also bring my journal and an inspirational book, such as *Listening Below the Noise* or *A New Earth*, should the urge to write or read arise.

Perhaps you'd like to join me for this inner space exploration journey? Together we can push the boundaries of our understanding, search for the transformational light of our personal cosmic dawns, and experience the quiet of the void. It's been said that in that deep inner space, you can hear the whispers of Divine intent.

[00:09:49] 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!

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[00:10:52] [END OF AUDIO]