



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 147 – How to Utilize Transitions to Transform Your Life
September 4, 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: Today's episode is brought to you by The Athena Wellness Academy, your resource for wholehearted living.

The Academy's featured offering is an online course called, *From 'Type A' to 'Type Be,' How to Mindfully Descend the Corporate Ladder and Invite What's Next*. This course is perfect for you if you're contemplating or navigating a professional transition, and it's available as a self study or with a small cohort of students facilitated by me, Kathy Robinson.

To learn more, I invite you to go to AthenaWellnessAcademy.teachable.com or click on the link in the show notes.

[00:01:21] Kathy: Hello and welcome. Thanks so much for joining me.



Today we'll be discussing life transitions and how, with the right frame of mind, these passages can be used as opportunities for transformation, to use them as a springboard to take you to places you never thought possible.

Sometimes life transitions begin with what feels like a little tap on the shoulder. And sometimes it's more like a shove. Other times they arrive in epiphanies. I'll share some turning points where I've experienced all three and some thoughts to help you navigate your own transitions.

We'll talk about how to best utilize these pivotal moments that are unexpected and cause us to make a choice or change direction. And how these events might lead us to new life experiences and ways of being that we probably wouldn't have invited from the comfort of our own routine.

And that's what we'll be exploring today. We'll talk about:

- The difference between life transitions and transformation;
- Three meaningful transitions that changed my life; and
- How to utilize transitions to transform your life.

So sit back, take a nice long breath to ground yourself in presence, and let's get started.

[00:02:52] So let's begin by distinguishing between transition and transformation.

Transition is defined as, "The process or period of changing from one state or condition to another." You can think of it as a passage from one stage of life to a new one. It's an external event or a milestone that unfolds and alters your existence in some way, such as your expectations, plans or sense of self. It relates to some sort of change in your personal



or professional life, be it a joyful one, like a partnership or an addition to the family, or one that brings sadness, such as an illness or death.

Transformation is defined as, “A thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance; a metamorphosis.” It’s been my experience that when I bring intention to how I’m responding to the transition I’m navigating, there’s opportunity for deep inner transformation.

There are some transitions that we choose, such as starting a new job, moving house or beginning a relationship. And there are some where we don’t have a choice, such as a downsizing or an illness.

Depending on your past experiences or frame of mind, transitions can seem challenging, disruptive and uncomfortable, disorienting us to the point where we can feel directionless. And strong emotions can surface such as fear, anxiety or anger. For many, times of transition equate to times of stress.

But transitions can also hold great meaning and feel exciting, healing, regenerative. They can bring transcendence, a deep internal shift to another level of awareness. It’s a place of stepping into the unknown and welcoming a life reorientation.

I call these moments turning points, places where significant change occurs, moments that are more than just a new way of doing things. These are times when we embrace new ways of being.

[00:05:22] Three meaningful transitions that changed my life.



When I was writing my book, *The Athena Principles*, and establishing myself in the wellness world, I was, and still am, quite adamant that optimal well-being is more than just physical fitness. It spans mind, body and spirit. That said, it's been my experience that most people, myself included, start their wellness journey with something physical because it's tangible, you can see results. And as you start to physically feel better, you begin to notice opportunities to enhance the mental, emotional and spiritual parts of yourself.

Interestingly enough, my own three wellness turning points, which are detailed in the book, align with this spectrum, each one allowing me to go deeper in my life. I share these brief stories, not only to give you a sense of the range of change, but how these experiences build on each other, taking you places that you may be unable to imagine on your own.

My first wellness turning point was related to body and focused on nutrition and exercise. At the time, I was in my mid-30s, commuting home from a large New York City financial institution, and I took a tumble on the stairs in Rockefeller Plaza. Aside from a bruised ego, I was fine. But on the way home, I came face to face with what was true for me at the time. I had gained 25 pounds since college, I was not taking good care of myself, and the balance and reflexes that my once athletic self used to take for granted were not as sharp as they once were.

So I did some research. I bought a then popular book called *Body for Life* by Bill Phillips, and I started his program. I loved the weight training and clean eating, but the cardio crushed me. During the treadmill "runs," I was able to only jog for about four minutes, and those minutes were interspersed throughout the 20 minute workout, one minute at a time.



But as the weeks unfolded, I was able to run for 20 minutes straight, three times a week. I lost the weight and my body composition changed. And along with the increased fitness, my confidence increased and healthy habits became a way of life. And it has continued to be. I still follow these simple protocols more than 20 years later and my vitality is through the roof at age 58.

Feeling better physically set the stage for the second turning point that was related to the mind, which included things for me, such as simplifying, finding purpose, and self expression. It's five years later, and I'm 40-years-old working at a top investment bank. I'm on vacation in Alaska. Why Alaska? It was the farthest point from New York City that I could drive to in my camper van.

I was quite aware that I was burned out but I had no idea of its impact. In the expanse of the wilderness and in the deep silence, I began to sense what was wrong. I was compartmentalizing the emotional and creative parts of myself, burying anything that didn't support my Wall Street persona of productivity and hard work.

Driving through the National Forest that makes up most of southern Alaska on my way home, I knew I needed to make significant changes, but I wasn't sure how. I needn't worry. When I returned, I received a call from a former boss inviting me to join his team at a Fortune 250 company in a different industry. Within months, I left an 18 year Wall Street career behind to start what would become a 15 year run at my new company, where it was easier to balance work and family life while exploring new creative projects.

Which led to the third turning point related to spirit or connection with my inner voice to further align the life I was living. I'm now in my mid-40s and off to a week-long writer's



retreat off the coast of Seattle. I had been writing in notebooks since my 20s, with pen and paper always ready as I traveled for work or roadtripped on the weekends.

I always wanted to be an author and this retreat would be the first time anyone would see what I was writing. I was nervous about the visibility. And I was so far out of my comfort zone, it was humorous. But I also worried what it would be like to have a lifelong dream *not* come to fruition if I didn't get a supportive response. That possibility was devastating to me.

Thirteen years later, I'm still absorbing what I learned and experienced at that retreat. Aside from the positive writing feedback, I connected with the wisest, wildest and deepest part of myself, and everything shifted inside. It was the first time I could clearly sense who I wanted to be and how I wanted to live - and there was a big gap. This transformation was the least visible externally, but it was the biggest change internally. And it's the reason why I'm here with you today.

[00:11:27] I share these stories because you can look at my life now and easily see the connected dots on how I got here today. I'm an author, podcaster, blogger, online educator and coach. But when I tripped up those stairs 20 plus years ago, there was no way I could envision that I would own a wellness company and write and share stories for a living.

So keep that in mind as we turn the conversation to you. We're all walking unmarked paths. And while we may set our course directionally, we don't know what's around the corner. That's the adventure of life. As you reflect on your own turning points, you may see a pattern. For me, it started with getting my body in shape, which led to a clearer mind



and space to explore a broader purpose outside of myself, and then going deep on values and truly listening to get to know who I am and why I'm here.

So let's talk about how to utilize transitions to transform your life. Are you in the midst of a major change or transition? Perhaps you just want to shake things up yourself to break out of a long standing pattern. Here are three questions and related commentary to explore that will not only help you feel more at ease as you move from one way of being to another, but they'll help you reframe your current challenge as a transformative opportunity and create a path forward.

1. **How can I connect and feed my inner fire?** Transitions can be exhausting. Yet, even in times of complete burnout, your inner fire can guide you. It's what directed me through the Alaskan wilderness all those years ago, a tiny flicker of desire to live a different way. Look for the flame. And find ways to give it some oxygen.
2. **Where can I create a quiet little space so I can hear my own guidance?** Inner guidance is subtle and can come to us in many ways, such as a feeling, desire, memory, pattern, lesson, thought or dream. It can seem illogical or nonsensical in the frame of our current life. But if it's true, it will continuously show up. Suspend judgment and start listening to what's stirring. Give yourself permission to follow the intuitive breadcrumbs and see where they may lead.
3. **How can I love what's in front of me today?** While the inner track winds its way in its own timeframe, there's still a world of outer commitments to attend to. Transformation takes time and needs its own space and silence to alchemize. Staying present and trusting the grander Universal design, while staying positive



and letting go of outcome, will keep you sane and work wonders to align you with unforeseen outcomes.

You can work with these questions sequentially or stay with one that's tugging at you.

[00:14:58] As you know I'm a proponent of taking little steps to reinforce all the head and heart work that we need to do as we transform. Here are a few fun ones to try:

1. **If your new transformed self had a soundtrack, what would it be?** Create a playlist of songs that would support this new life phase that's taking shape and listen whenever you need a boost. You can also search out podcasts or audiobooks that can act as positive reinforcement during this transition.
2. **Identify one thing you're really looking forward to enjoying once you get to this new place and find a way to bring an element of it into your life today.** For example, in my last years of corporate, I was really looking forward to the freedom and schedule flexibility I would have when I owned my own business. So when I had the chance to work from home once a week before I left my corporate life, I began those days feeling what it would feel like to live this way each workday.
3. **Take an action that helps you feel like your transformed self.** Writing a book outline and then a first draft helped me feel like a writer while I was still in my corporate role. Not only did I learn a lot about the writing process and have a book drafted before I retired, I got to feel what it's like to be a writer, if only for a scheduled hour each day.



[00:16:39] As we bring this episode to a close, I'm reminded of the concept of divine timing, the belief that life's events occur at the right moment and you can handle whatever comes your way. Everything occurs exactly when it's supposed to, in its own time, naturally ebbing and flowing.

So if you find yourself at the end of a lifecycle and beginning anew, I hope that you found these examples, questions and suggestions helpful. Remember to treat yourself kindly as you would a good friend who's navigating the terrain you find yourself in. What would help you feel nourished during these times? Give yourself that gift. Most importantly, remember to listen to and heed what you're sensing.

I'll leave you with a few lines from Jackson Browne's *For a Dancer*. He expressed it better than I ever could.

"Keep a fire burning in your eye.
Pay attention to the open sky.
You never know what will be coming down."

Keep that fire burning. And I'll see you next time.

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[00:17:56] 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.

Until next time, be well!

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[00:18:58] [END OF AUDIO]