



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 199 – Thriving With R.A.I.N.
May 10, 2023

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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 friends. Thanks so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

Today's show is a Walking The Talk Vancast, a look behind the scenes into what I'm learning and working through along with a takeaway for you. These portable episodes are informal and casual, recorded on the go from wherever I happen to be at the time. And today, I'm on the road, heading home from a cross country road trip, which you'll be hearing more about in future vancasts.

[00:01:07] But no matter the territory that you're crossing, whether it's a coast to coast drive or something more internal, like the head to heart journey that I help



my clients and students navigate, there will be highs and lows that bring challenges and difficult emotions to work through.

So today I'd like to share a practice that I learned from a workshop that I attended years ago and it relates to the feelings that can arise when you claim ownership over your actions. The practice is called R.A.I.N. and it's a Buddhist practice used by meditation teachers. It was popularized by Dr. Tara Brach, who was the author of books like *True Refuge* and *Radical Compassion*.

[00:01:56] It's a simple process that uses the acronym R.A.I.N. for the four steps: R is Recognize, A is Allow, I is Investigate, and N is Nurture. Here's how you use it.

Whenever a difficult situation or emotion arises, try sitting quietly while going through these four steps:

1. **Recognize what's happening.** Focus your attention on what's happening inside you. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations without judgment. What sensations are you feeling? What emotions? Can you name your experience?
2. **Allow life to be just as it is.** Acknowledge what's happening without judging, controlling or pushing it away. This doesn't mean that you have to like or agree with what's happening. It simply means you're willing to let it be there without trying to change it.
3. **Investigate with gentle attention and care.** Explore the thoughts, emotions and physical sensations you're feeling more deeply. For example, if stress is overwhelming, where do you feel it in your body? And what is it telling you? Is



it in tense muscles? Is there anger behind the stress? Frustration? What thoughts are surfacing for you? Name what you're feeling in detail.

4. **Nurture with self-compassion.** Ask yourself what you need most in this moment. It could be acceptance, protection, a soothing touch, a deep breath or a walk. Realize the impermanence of the thoughts and emotions you're experiencing. And rest in the knowing that these feelings will shift and this experience will not define or limit you.

[00:03:57] As you can see, R.A.I.N. is a powerful practice that will help you work with difficult emotions and experiences in a more compassionate and skillful way. It's a practice that can be used in everyday life, but it can be especially helpful in times of stress or difficulty.

For example, it can be used in times of anger when you feel frustrated, helpless, criticized or blamed. Basically times when you're not feeling good enough or feeling like you're not in control.

Another emotion where R.A.I.N. can be helpful is sadness, times when you've lost a loved one or are going through a difficult time. Perhaps you're feeling lonely, isolated, or like you failed in some way.

R.A.I.N. can also help regulate anxiety, times when you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed and not knowing what the future brings.

So let's go deeper with the last example of feeling anxious and take the steps of R.A.I.N. one by one:



1. **Recognize** that you're feeling anxious. Notice the physical sensations in your body, such as your heart rate increasing or your muscles tensing up. Pay attention to your thoughts and your feelings, such as "I'm so overwhelmed," or "I can't do this."
2. **Allow** life to be just as it is. Once you recognize your anxiety, accept it without judgment. This doesn't mean that you have to like or agree with your anxiety. It simply means that you're willing to let it be there without trying to change it.
3. **Investigate** with gentle attention and care. Next, investigate your anxiety with curiosity and compassion. What's your anxiety trying to tell you? What need is it trying to meet? Once you understand your anxiety better, you can start to respond to it in a more constructive way.
4. **Nurture** with self-compassion. Finally, remember that you're not your anxiety, you're the awareness that is aware of your anxiety. When you can step back from your anxiety and see it for what it is, you'll be less likely to get caught up in it. Identify what you most need in this moment, and give it to yourself with love.

[00:06:21] Self-compassion is an important component of R.A.I.N., because it invites you to be kind and understanding to yourself when you're going through a difficult time. As a practice, you learn how to cope in a healthy way and build resilience. When you're self-compassionate, you treat and support yourself as you would a beloved friend, taking good care of yourself physically and emotionally, lessening your negative emotional overwhelm.



There are numerous ways to practice self-compassion and here are a few examples:

- **Express your feelings** instead of suppressing your emotions. You can work with R.A.I.N. as they surface as a way to process them and let them go.
- **Be a good friend to yourself.** This includes aligning your self-talk with how you would talk and support a friend.
- **Cut yourself some slack.** We all make mistakes. And when you do, instead of criticizing yourself, learn from it and move on.
- **Enjoy yourself.** Spend some time each day doing something that feels good, including activities you love or people who give you that feel-good vibe.

Self-compassion is a skill that takes time and practice to develop. But the more you practice it, the easier it will become and the healthier you'll feel.

[00:07:45] Along with R.A.I.N., here are three additional practices to help you cultivate self compassion:

- **Mindfulness meditation.** This is a practice that involves paying attention to the present moment without judgment. This can help you become more aware of your thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. When you're more aware of your experience, you become curious about the workings of the mind and are less likely to judge yourself or get caught up in negative thoughts.



- **Supportive touch.** Simply placing your hand over your heart or on your cheek soothes the nervous system and helps you feel calm and safe. Simply take a few breaths while you feel the warmth and sensation of your hand. You can also offer yourself a few silent supportive words or phrases while you're doing this.
- **Compassionate writing.** Bring to mind a real or imagined kind, compassionate friend who loves and accepts you unconditionally. And write a letter to yourself from the perspective of this friend. You could address a specific challenging situation or you can focus on kind, caring wishes for overall health and happiness.

The reason why I find these practices so effective is they allow us to pause when we're gripping too tightly on life or on a particular outcome, when we revert to our old Type A behaviors and coping mechanisms. In choosing to pause with a practice like R.A.I.N., we create space to make a better choice for ourselves. Most importantly, it reconnects us with our heart and allows our inner wisdom to guide us back onto our path with compassion.

[00:09:42] I'll leave you with a quote from Tara Brach, who is a proponent of the R.A.I.N. practice. She says, "When you've completed the active steps of R.A.I.N., it's important to just notice your own presence and rest in that wakeful, tender space of awareness. The fruit of R.A.I.N. is realizing that you're no longer imprisoned in the trance of unworthiness or in any limiting sense of self. Give yourself the gift of becoming familiar with the truth and natural freedom of your being. It's mysterious and precious."



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[00:10:23] 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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[00:11:26] [END OF AUDIO]