



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 203 – A Ritual for Letting Go**  
**June 7, 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, with my van still in the shop, I'm on my back deck. It's such a pleasant day and I'm so happy to be talking to you.

**[00:01:08]** In the last episode ([Episode 202](#)), I shared some thoughts on approaching a new decade. As I continue to sit and walk with this new horizon of



life, it's starting to feel more and more like an opportunity. And it's up to me to open to a vast array of possibilities.

When we approach any new threshold, it's up to us to determine how to navigate it. In terms of milestones, I think my 30th birthday was the hardest because it became clear that I was no longer a kid. I was an adult and expected to do adult things. And I managed to meet that expectation about 50% of the time.

But as the decades went on, I embraced each one with more enthusiasm. I welcomed a great amount of change in my 40s and I felt a tremendous amount of freedom when I hit my 50s. I have no idea what my 60s will bring. But it feels like it's going to be wildly creative and expressive. Bring - it - on!

Perhaps you, too, may be feeling like you're welcoming a new season of your life. It doesn't have to be a milestone birthday. Whatever personal or professional transition you're experiencing at the moment, I invite you to bring it to mind as I share an unusual story and some ideas to make the transition a bit easier.

The story is about a funeral in Kathmandu.

**[00:02:44]** Nepal was on my list of countries to visit for a long time. And I finally got the opportunity in 2019. I found Nepal to be much like neighboring India, in that it's a heightened sensory experience, almost to the point of overload. It fed right into why I love being a traveler, the opportunity to be immersed and savor new surroundings, culture and traditions.



During my visit to Nepal, I had the opportunity to spend some time at Pashupatinath Temple, which is a temple complex located in the capital city of Kathmandu. This Hindu temple was believed to have been founded in the fifth century.

The complex covers more than 250 acres and sits on the banks of the Bagmati River. On its grounds are a number of temples, shrines and ghats, which are platforms for cremation ceremonies.

Cremation near the Bagmati River is a centuries old Hindu tradition, as the river is considered to be sacred and has the power to cleanse the soul. The outdoor cremation process begins with washing and anointing the body, placing it in a pyre made of wood and spices, lighting the fire by the eldest male family member, and then scattering the ashes in the river. It's a soulful way to celebrate the departed's life and mourn the family's loss.

It was an honor to witness such a ritual from afar. I was standing across the river watching several funerals in different stages, from preparation to conclusion. I found a little space among the throngs of people, cows, goats, dogs and monkeys, absorbing the colors and the architecture, the chanting and drum beats, the smell of incense and smoke, and the underlying quiet energy of a sacred site.

With that as a backdrop, here's the story I want to share that I believe has significance in times of life transitions. It's about a centuries old ceremony called Makar Sankranti and it's a figurative funeral for holy men in Kathmandu.



These holy men are called sadhus and they have renounced worldly possessions to dedicate themselves to the spiritual life. On the day of the ceremony, hundreds gather and form a procession through the streets of the city, until they get to the Pashupatinath Temple for a number of rituals, including bathing in the Bagmati River, chanting, and making offerings.

The last of the rituals is a figurative funeral where they burn their old clothes and possessions as a way to symbolically detach from the material world and recommit to their spiritual path. They believe that through this ritual of renewal, they're able to connect with the spiritual realm and receive its blessings.

**[00:06:01]** Of course, I'm not suggesting that you should go to Nepal or burn all your worldly possessions to walk the spiritual path. But I do think there are three lessons from the story that are applicable:

1. Letting go of attachment clears the way for enhanced growth, focus and connection.
2. A ritual for letting go can serve as a renewal to the commitment already made, a beautiful way to bring a refreshed self to the path while also acknowledging the journey can be difficult but worth the sacrifice.
3. Deep reflection on what we carry and deem important, along with a willingness to let it go, can serve as a reminder of the importance of the present moment and trusting the path forward.



As your takeaway, I'd like to offer a way that you might be able to work with these lessons and create a figurative funeral process for letting go for your unique circumstance. And you can do this by considering four things:

1. Defining the transition or challenge that you're working through;
2. Determining what's in the way that can be released;
3. Deciding on the method you'll use to let go of what no longer serves; and
4. Getting clarity on your intended outcome.

All of this can be done through simple reflection. Let's take them one by one.

**First, the purpose.** What challenge or situation is holding you back from growing? How might letting go help? And how might you travel more lightly as you move forward?

**Second, the cargo.** What specifically are you releasing? Emotions like anger, resentment or guilt? An outgrown relationship? Physical possessions? Outdated goals or dreams?

**Third is the method.** How would you like to release the past and allow your old self to symbolically die? Emotions can be cleared through movement or with natural elements like fire, wind or water. Relationships can be addressed through conversation or by making intentional choices. Physical possessions can be discarded or donated. And outdated goals or dreams can be released through writing.



Whatever method you use to let go, it's helpful to make peace with what's being released and allow the related feelings to surface. Much like a regular funeral, there's a grieving process with letting go.

**And lastly, the intention.** How would you like your life to feel once the releasing is completed? The intention could simply be to move on from the past and get a fresh start. Or it could be to live more simply so you can spend quality time with loved ones. Maybe you'd like to live more mindfully and have peace of mind. Perhaps you want to go deeper with your inner exploration so you can live a more meaningful and purposeful life.

**[00:09:24]** Should you choose to go through this process, what can you expect? From me it started with releasing physical possessions, items I had in the storage room in my basement. As I cleared out old belongings, I simply asked myself if the object would serve me as I moved forward.

Clearing the space gave me momentum to look beyond my material surroundings. Much of the releasing I'm doing now in preparation of my next decade is being done in my journal and on long hikes. It seems the more writing I do, the more tranquility I feel.

I hope you'll consider creating a figurative funeral process to let go of what no longer serves you. It's a wonderful way to look back on your journey with gratitude, recalibrate where you are today, and ready yourself for all the goodness that lies ahead.



**[00:10:23]** I'll leave you today with a quote from the book *Into The Wild*, written by Jon Krakauer, which I'll link up in the show notes. This quote comes from a letter written by the protagonist.

"The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure. The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence, there's no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun. Once you become accustomed to such a life, you will see its full meaning and its incredible beauty."

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**[00:11:05] 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!

[music] **[00:12:07] [END OF AUDIO]**