



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 214 – Consulting as a Second Act with Justin Smith, CFP**  
**July 26, 2023**

[music]

**[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](https://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 for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

Today, I'm joined, once again, by certified financial planner, Justin Smith. During this discussion, Justin shares his insight and advice to those interested in leaving corporate life and using their professional expertise to develop a consulting practice.

And now onto the show. I hope you find this conversation helpful.

**[00:01:58] Kathy** Once again, I'm joined by certified financial planner from Savant Wealth, Justin Smith. Welcome back, Justin.

**[00:02:04] Justin Smith:** Thanks for having me again, Kathy.

**[00:02:07] Kathy:** Justin, you're doing some work now on helping professionals package their expertise and offer it as a second act. I find this incredibly compelling.

I'd love to know a little bit more about that and what advice you might have for listeners who have these kinds of marketable skills that would like to do this type of work.

**[00:02:27] Justin:** Perfect. I'm excited to jump in and explore that.

To get started, just to kind of set the table for this, I've been focusing on helping people pursue hybrid careers or second acts or encore careers, whatever we want



to call them, for a while now. I just think it's a really great way for people to live life to the fullest and get the most out of life, get the perfect blend of the satisfaction, fulfillment, and compensation from work but also have that flexibility and autonomy that retirement offers. If you do it right, you can have the best of both worlds.

So over the years, I've developed this kind of matrix about what types of jobs people can do as a second act or encore career. It's this two-by-two matrix and if you look at it, there's the most typical role I see people pursue in each of those four quadrants.

As I've gone through the years, we've talked about some people who want to go work in the community. That's one of these boxes, where they're working in the non-profit sector or they're working outdoors or they're working in the education sector. They're pivoting out of the corporate grind and doing something more hands-on in the community. There's a tremendous amount of great opportunities there.

Another thing that some people pursue is either the arts or entrepreneurship. That's really more of a hard pivot for people who are leaving the corporate world. That is really a passion project.

One other way that people can pursue this, we call it the victory lap lifestyle, is serving on boards. Now, that's not for everyone. You have to have a very high level of expertise and pedigree to even be able to play in that arena. When people have



the opportunity to do that, it's fantastic, but it's not something most people can pursue if they don't have C-suite experience.

That leaves with the fourth component, which I also find is the most common way, of people pursuing a victory lap career and that's with consulting. I use that term very broadly. That could mean becoming a consultant, working for a consulting company. I even lump in being a contractor or a freelancer into that bucket.

It's all the same thing. You are packaging your expertise in a non-employee agreement. You are just selling your services to the marketplace. The distinctions I set there are just really about the mechanics of how you package it up. But at the end of the day, it's about thinking through your expertise, your experience, and the unique problem that you solve in the marketplace, and then finding how to best market that and get paid to go solve those problems.

I've been doing this new project as an offshoot to my *Career Crossroads Workbook*, which I'm just calling, *How to Become a Consultant*. Because that is the number one question that seems to pop up when people are at this career crossroads. They love the idea but they just don't know how and don't know where to get started.

So I've been trying to put together some frameworks from the financial planning perspective and also the tactical business side about how to actually pursue that kind of consulting or contracting work in your next act.



**[00:05:43] Kathy:** Perfect. For the listener who you've piqued their interest and they want to begin to explore that, what are some initial steps that they can take to see if this is something that's right for them?

**[00:05:56] Justin:** I think this is a process, and this is an evolution. I've seen a lot of people execute this successfully, but it rarely starts just right out of the gate as exactly what they expected and they're going 0 to 60 right away. This takes time and almost certainly will have iterations.

But I think the first couple of steps to start with are really around market research where you are getting an understanding both from your own perspective and from an outside perspective what problems you are really adept at solving. What is your unique value proposition in the marketplace? And then start connecting that with problems that the market's going to have.

Are you somebody that can solve a sales problem for a multinational company? Are you somebody that handles logistics for local distribution? Whatever the problem is, get clear on what that problem is you solve and then start thinking about who are some of the companies or people that I could market this service to?

Look and find competitors and see who else is doing this, Where might the gaps be? Ultimately, you're just trying to find this fit between your skills and the marketplace, that product market fit.



After that starts to come into focus, you can start to think about, “Who are my ideal clients?” Maybe I could serve a large number of different companies, but who are really ideal? Who are the ones I can hit home runs for? Then start to find ways to wedge your foot in the door, make contacts, do exploratory interviews, whatever it might be, just so you can start getting some at-bats.

That is really the first thing to focus on is this, broadly speaking, the marketing and strategy. A lot of times, a misstep I've seen people take, is we go right to, “Well, I need a website, I need a business card, I need an LLC, and I'm going to need to do payroll.” None of that matters until you have your first client. It really doesn't matter even until you have your second, third, fifth, or 10th client.

Don't worry about the logistics of the business. That'll figure itself out. You can deal with that when the time comes, but if you find yourself starting there, you're distracting yourself from the actual really hard work, which is getting out there, hitting the pavement, talking to people, and refining and honing what that unique problem is. If you find one person who's willing to pay for it, then you'll probably find the second person. If you find the second person or company that's going to pay for it, now you're starting to get feedback from the marketplace, you can find the third and the fourth.

So you don't need to think about how am I going to turn this into, how am I going to get 100 clients? Just how are you going to get one and then you're going to get two, then you're going to get five, and we're going to go from there.



So that's really the way I like to think about it. Start with that product market fit, and then start finding that first customer and then you can evolve and iterate the business from there.

**[00:09:07] Kathy:** That is excellent advice, again, advice I wish I had when I started a couple of years back because that is spot on. It's not your website, it's not your business card, it's the results and the transformation that you can get for others.

Wonderful. Justin, thank you again so much for your time, so helpful. Really appreciate you being here. I will link up, again, all of your information in the show notes.

**[00:09:32] Justin:** Perfect. Thanks, Kathy.

**[00:09:36] 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]

**[00:10:38] [END OF AUDIO]**