



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 215 – Reimagining Midlife Wellness – Part II
August 2, 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, as we ride out a midsummer heatwave, I'm recording this at home.

[00:01:05] Today we'll continue with the second installment of our multi-part series on reimagining midlife wellness. This is an essential topic for several reasons.



First, it's important to stay well in times of transition. Secondly, it's vital to stay well as we get older. And lastly, vitality is essential if we're going to make the most of our next chapter.

Since wellness will look different for each of you, in this series of talks, I'll share some thoughts and give you a framework to define what matters most to you at this stage of your life and ways to continue to take positive action to be well.

In the last vancast, which was Part I of this series, we talked about the difference between wellness, well-being and optimal well-being. We discussed the essential elements of well-being and what can get in the way of our natural state of wellness. And then we ended with a series of questions for you to explore regarding your current state of well-being and how you're viewing the journey ahead.

Today in Part II of this series, we'll be exploring the five Athena Principles, along with tools and practices that you can use to enhance your wellness and well-being. You can get a free downloadable overview and action plan of the concepts we'll be discussing today at athenawellness.com/action_plan, and I'll put a link to that in the show notes.

[00:02:45] Let's start with the significance of Athena.

Athena was a Greek goddess who signified both strength and wisdom, two qualities I help my clients access in themselves, especially in times of personal or professional transition.



Athena represents the perfect balance between left-brain logic and objectivity and right-brain intuition and creativity. She was independent, unapologetically herself, and fully owned her power.

What I love most about this archetype is Athena's search for knowledge, wisdom and a fondness for the betterment of herself and her community. It's her unrelenting quest for inner knowing and enlightenment that I find most compelling.

My book, *The Athena Principles*, provides a holistic, integrated approach to create a lifestyle of principles, practices and actions that will help you discover and reprioritize yourself and align who you are in the world with your deepest self.

Even though the book was written with overworked professionals in mind, it's a lovely invitation to reimagine our midlife experience. That's because **the core message of the book is this**: You can align your life with your deepest desires by reconnecting to your body, mind and spirit through the exploration of five principles and related practices. This, I have found, leads to enhanced well-being and wholehearted living, which I define as feeling well so you can do the things that light you up with the people you love.

[00:04:36] *The Athena Principles* combines wellness philosophy with a three component methodology:

1. **Tools** to assess your current state of wellness, provide clarity, track progress, and set new objectives.



2. **Principles**, which provide a solid foundation and serve as a guide for current action and in future decisions.
3. **Practices** that, when performed consistently, aim to create good habits and increased well-being.

The methodology recognizes that wellness is a fluid process that thrives with a flexible approach. It regards wellness as a practice, honors and cultivates inner knowing, and provides accountability. It can provide you with a foundation for making change, a vantage point to help you see where you're working against yourself, and the scalable process that can grow with you.

[00:05:40] So let's take the *The Athena Principles* methodology components one by one, starting with the tools.

The first tool is the **Holistic Wellness Spectrum** and this is included in the [download](#) that I mentioned. The Spectrum is a broad inventory that can help you determine where to begin your wellness journey. It can be used repeatedly and is a useful tool to find new entry points to further increase wellness once progress has been made in other areas.

The Spectrum is categorized into three sections. The first is **vitality** and it includes activities related to physical movement and nourishment. Vitality is where most people start when they think about taking positive steps toward enhanced well-being.



The next section is **flow**. And it includes ideas for simplifying life routines, living intuitively, and finding meaning and purpose. It also includes creative expression, exploration, and inspiration.

The last section is **connection** and it includes a list of contemplative practices and ways of connecting with ourselves, in our relationships and with our community. It also includes things like our natural world, adventure, and celebration.

The second tool is the **Wellness Assessment**, which is used for orientation, and it's also included in the [download](#). Think back to the last time you were in a large setting, such as an airport. Most likely there was an illustration depicting the layout of the environment and a red circle with the words, "You are here." The Wellness Assessment will provide a similar depiction of where you are in your journey, and it can be completed in under five minutes. It's a simple evaluation used to rate where your current level of satisfaction is in each of the Holistic Wellness Spectrum categories.

These tools are effective because they give you clarity. They also give you a chance to reflect on why a particular starting point is best for you at this moment. For those under extreme pressure, for example, a good place to start to increase wellness may be to decrease stress, not add to it. In this case, focusing on quality sleep or stress management will pay bigger dividends than adding the pressure of trying something like a new bootcamp regimen.

[00:08:24] The second methodology component is the principles – *The Athena Principles*.



The word *principle* is defined as “a fundamental truth that serves as the foundation for a system, belief, behavior or chain of reasoning.” Here's an overview of The Principles:

1. The first principle is **Self-compassion**. And this shows up in the care for our own well-being in the form of self-acceptance and nurturing support.
2. The second principle is **Intention**. Intentions help us aim, set direction, and connect emotionally to what we want. It's the heart-based “*Why*” behind the urge to transform.
3. The third principle is **Consistency**. This is the secret ingredient to the whole equation. Consistency is how you choose to show up for yourself and stay committed and engaged throughout the process, especially during challenging times.
4. The fourth principle is **Growth Mindset**. How you view your wellness journey will determine your progress and enjoyment. Applying a growth mindset where challenges are seen as opportunities will position you to move forward with grace and ease.
5. And the fifth principle is **Accountability**. This is simply a systematic way to check in with what you commit to accomplish, to celebrate your wins, and to compassionately adjust whenever needed.

[00:10:03] The last methodology component is the practices. Practices are simply actions that we do for the purpose of learning, growing or experiencing.



The practices I recommend are specifically designed for you to discover and connect with your deepest self. This allows you to access your innate wisdom, or what I like to call my stillpoint, a place of calm and knowing. The more you know this inner voice, the better prepared you'll be as you walk the path that takes you from head to heart, and invite you to live wholeheartedly as your true self.

At its core, creating a practice is just a method for developing new levels of self awareness. If you're intentional with your practices, you'll find that they'll inform and support your life choices going forward. These practices are meant to be incorporated into your daily life with the ability to be amended and scaled as you grow and develop. I highly encourage you to modify them in any way that best suits you.

[00:11:17] Let's review the four types of practices that we'll be working with in this series. They are: contemplation, journaling, positive action, and holding a question. Let's take them one by one.

- **Contemplation.** I intentionally use the word *contemplation* because it means deep reflective thought, which is the state of mind and spirit that we're looking to nurture. You can also think of these contemplation practices as visualization or meditation.

If any of the language I use to describe these exercises doesn't work for you, simply amend the practice in a way that will lead you toward inner attention. If you work through the activities I suggest and find yourself



thinking *I can't*, I simply invite you to spend a little time trying to figure out what you *can* do and focus there.

For example, if an activity is focused on sound or breath and that's not working for you, take the practice outside, take a walk in the woods, sit by the water, gaze at the night sky, or just be present where you are. Then get to the spirit of the practice in a way that supports reflective thought. Feel free to modify any practice so you'll do them with presence, intention and positivity.

- The next practice is **journaling**. And I will readily admit that for some folks, the thought of writing stirs huge fears. So let me assure you that if you can write an email or send a text, you have the ability to do the exercises that I'll be suggesting. You won't be sharing your writing unless you choose and you're free to discard your work, but I would advise you to keep it for your own reference as you move forward in the series.

If you do enjoy writing or you do keep a journal, these practices will fit right in with your routine. If you don't enjoy narrative writing, no worries, you can use a bulleted list. You can use your phone, maybe your notes app or its audio, video or camera capabilities. And if you're more artistic, you can use the writing practice as time to doodle, sketch, paint or collage. If you want a portable or a virtual option, you can also use an online journal and some of those have multimedia capabilities.



Whatever method you choose, know that you're creating a safe place for learning what wholehearted living means for you. Consider your writing practice as a protected space, a private sanctuary, where you can identify where your inner and outer worlds are not congruent, where you can explore new ideas and new areas of interest, and where you can dive deep in fearless conversations with yourself. I also suggest that you include the date on your entries, the time of day, and your physical location, which is what I like to do.

- The next practice is **positive action**. It's been my experience that the best way to ensure there's a solid understanding of a new concept is to take a related positive action, a small intentional step toward a new way of being. I'll be suggesting hands-on experiential activities meant to be insightful, expansive and fun - a way to put into action all that you're learning. Taking small actions and consistently reinforcing them with a positive outlook will help you connect with and learn to trust your inner wisdom.
- The last practice is **holding a question**, which gives us the opportunity to examine our beliefs, traits, characteristics, roles, and social connections, and then decide if they're still the best choices for us as we move forward. Learning to hold a question can facilitate this process and help us determine what stays in our lives and what needs to change.

When we hold a question, we let it sit, which is useful when the answer is not known or readily apparent. In this space of curiosity, we open ourselves to



possibilities that stretch beyond our logical mind into the realm of the heart, which invites innovation, connections, and creativity. There's also power in the asking, in giving ourselves permission to not know and to work through it.

It's a practice that keeps us present. These are big, open ended questions that will invite you to be curious and go deep as you design your future. Don't rush the answers and be open to the mystery when you receive an answer that you don't expect. When an unexpected answer surfaces for you, just jot it down in your notebook. It's usually an indication that you're not filtering as you reflect, which is great, and you just may be heading down an exciting new trail of thought.

[00:16:44] As your takeaway today, here's some thoughts as you create your own practices:

1. **You have options.** Work with the practices in whatever way makes sense. Make them your own by listening to your inner guidance and amend them as you see fit. Just try them out. You can treat them as a living laboratory, one that can support change and encourage transformation as you experiment and discover.
2. **Commit.** Determine when and where you'll practice. I suggest designating a place where you will feel comfortable and creating a schedule that's sustainable. The magic is in the repetition and the honoring that comes from building the habit.



3. **Stay open.** Invite bewilderment and not knowing and living with your questions.
4. **Be kind to yourself.** That can take the form of suspending judgment on your efforts, which is especially important in the beginning, starting in small time increments, and then giving yourself the space to experiment or to allow yourself to just dream.

Above all, remember that the point of practice is to create an engaging conversation with your inner wisdom. I believe creating supportive practices will help you move toward what matters most while taking good care of yourself along the way. And these practices will help you rely on your own insight and keep you on a path that's right for you.

[00:18:26] It's been said that the longest journey that you'll make in your life is from your head to your heart. I believe it's also the most important one. This can lead to reshaping your current life into an integrated one that flows with vitality and creativity and connection.

There isn't a right way to reimagine yourself at midlife – only the right approach for you. This is your journey and you get to navigate it your way. Thank you for listening to this series. I hope it helps you as you chart your unique path.

And I know that just like Athena, you will already have the strength and wisdom for the journey ahead. I'll see you in the next installment of this series.

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[00:19:19] 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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