



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 219 – Reimagining Midlife Wellness, Part VI – Growth Mindset
August 30, 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 recording this close to home on a rainy August afternoon.

[00:01:01] Today we'll continue with the sixth installment of our multi-part series on Reimagining Midlife Wellness. This series is focusing on the importance of staying well as we get older, especially in times of transition. These talks will provide a



framework for you to define what matters most to you at this stage of your life and ways to continue to take positive action to be well.

Here's what we've discussed so far in this series:

- **Part I:** We talked about the difference between wellness and well-being, the essential elements of well-being, and what can get in the way of your 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.
- **Part II:** We explored the five Athena Principles, along with tools and practices that you can use to enhance your wellness and well-being. I also provided a free overview of the Principles and an action plan that you can download at [athenawellness.com/action-plan](https://www.athenawellness.com/action-plan). And I'll include a link in the show notes.
- **Part III:** We talked about the first Athena Principle, which is **self-compassion**, defined as the care for one's own well-being in the form of self-acceptance and nurturing support. It's the ability to accept our imperfections and be kind and understanding toward ourselves, especially during times of transition.
- **Part IV:** We explored the second Athena Principle, which is **intention**, defined as a way to help us aim, set direction, and connect emotionally to what we want. It's the heart-based "Why" behind the urge to transform.



- **Part V:** We talked about the third Athena Principle, which is **consistency**, defined as the art of staying committed and engaged, especially during challenging times.

[00:02:57] Today, we'll be exploring the fourth Athena Principle, which is **growth mindset**. I love this Principle because how you view your wellness journey not only determines your level of progress, but your level of enjoyment. And I've found that the older I get, the more satisfaction and pleasure I want out of my wellness routines.

This is a shift for many of us who are used to pushing our limits to the brink in the name of wellness. And that brings us to mindset. When you adopt a growth mindset, you begin to focus on what's right in your life. The more you practice this mindset, the more you'll begin to experience challenges as opportunities and that will position you to move forward with more confidence and ease.

As an example, I vividly remember my first CrossFit class a few years back. During my first session, I was surprised by the degree of intensity of some of the moves. The pace felt relentless. When I got home, I turned on the coffee pot and collapsed on the couch for 15 minutes before dragging myself to the shower to get ready for work.

When the alarm went off the next morning and I reached toward my night table to shut it off, I was jolted by the level of soreness I felt. "Uh-oh," I groaned as I laid there and then did a body scan realizing that every single muscle in my body ached. I could barely get out of bed. And for the next five days, every time I got out



of my car or up from my desk, my quads would freeze for a minute and I would wince and breathe deeply before taking a step.

But when the following Monday came, I was back at the CrossFit box nervously awaiting the first round of instructions. Based on my first experience, I knew I'd find a way to make it through the workout, although at the end of the 60 minutes, my energy was fully depleted.

Over the next few weeks, I felt a little more energy toward the end of the workout and a little less sore afterward. Some days, the improvement was barely noticeable. But in hindsight, the workouts did get easier over time. Even so, those workouts were something I endured rather than enjoyed.

Something significantly shifted after about a year of training. I began to appreciate certain aspects of the workouts, such as my ability to handle the unpredictability of the routines and how I could feel the blood pumping through my body as I worked out. I began to see improvement in the amount that I could lift and the types of things that I could do. This helped me begin to equate the once uncomfortable burn that I felt in my muscles with being alive and strong, rather than fatigued. I began to appreciate what my body could do, which was a lot for a woman in her 50s.

I also reconnected with my "Why," including the sense of community with my fellow CrossFitters. Working out no longer felt like something I *had* to do, it became something I *got* to do.



[00:06:19] This is how a growth mindset works. By choosing to focus your energy and resources on the positive instead of the negative, you take ownership of your emotions and experiences. It's an ongoing process.

As I mentioned earlier in this series of talks, I'm a co-provider of care for a family member. When these responsibilities suddenly increased about six weeks ago, I needed to make another adjustment to my workout approach, putting my CrossFit membership on hold and working out at home. And I'll talk more about this when we wrap up the series and I share how I've reimaged my own midlife wellness.

But let's continue now by going a bit deeper into growth mindset.

There are two components in the dictionary definition of mindset. The first is **attitude**, and the second is **habit**. Let's begin with the first component.

A **positive attitude** is a state of mind that has the capacity to envision and routinely expect favorable outcomes, which influences behavior. A person with a positive attitude builds on a foundation of optimism and positive thinking. They view situations positively, using phrases such as "I can," "we will" and "it's possible." And they don't contribute to fear-based thinking or actions.

These folks perceive obstacles as opportunistic challenges. They acknowledge, but don't dwell on, problems and see silver linings in the unexpected. These folks like to try new things, appreciate the goodness in all people, and believe in a greater good for all. They accept the world as it is and work to make it better.



But how do you employ a positive attitude? Sometimes just a small shift in attitude can get you going in the right direction. Things such as shifting from a feeling of drudgery (I have to) to being open to trying something new (I get to).

You can also try easing up on the need for perfection and doing the best you can at any given point in time. And lastly, reframing your setbacks by finding inspiration in similar stories, addressing what didn't go as planned, and expressing gratitude for what did go well.

[00:08:48] And now to the second component of mindset. Your **habits** are behaviors that create who you are and determine where you're going. Habits are something you do repeatedly, sometimes without thought. I like to think of habit as a groove, a way to make good choices routine and easy by the support system created around it.

People who establish and practice good habits tend to be self-motivated and action-oriented, rising early and minimizing time spent that's not in alignment with what matters most to them. These folks are disciplined and health conscious, eating well, exercising often and prioritizing sleep.

These folks are also people-oriented who enjoy healthy relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and those in their community. They're emotionally mature with well-defined boundaries, yet generous with time and resources. And lastly, they tend to be growth-oriented, investing in practices that support their continuous improvement and ongoing learning.



Of course, some habits can also work against us. We all have unfavorable habits that have become actions we perform on autopilot. These are done without much thought or consideration as to how they're affecting us in the long-term. And these are the habits that can sabotage what we truly want out of life.

[00:10:21] And now your takeaway. What habits have you formed that are in direct conflict with your wellness aspirations? How can you find ways to make your wellness aspirations a priority? And what makes good habits stick for you?

There's a pattern that behavioral psychologists like to use to encourage forming good habits. And they use these three elements: routines, cues, and incentives.

- **Routines:** Finding ways to make actions so commonplace and memorable that they're easy to follow;
- **Cues:** Visual reminders that promote a positive state of mind in relation to habit; and
- **Incentives:** Reinforcing the intended behavior with a meaningful reward.

Everything that we've discussed in this episode comes down to this: The secret of forming good habits starts with the awareness that seemingly small or inconsequential decisions you make add up over time. The trajectory of good habits will propel you forward if your decision-making is in alignment with where you want to go.

[00:11:37] To summarize, when I think of mindset, I'm reminded of a story attributed to the Cherokee lineage.



An elder is walking with a young boy and talking about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” the elder says. “It’s a terrible fight and it’s between two wolves. One is evil. He’s anger, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.”

“The other is good. He’s joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you and inside every other person, too.”

The young boy gave it some thought and then asked, “Which wolf will win?”

The elder replied, “The one you feed.”

Attitudes and habits are intertwined and play a huge part in who you are and who you will become. The shift from a fixed mindset of “I should,” to a growth mindset of “I will” puts the power back in your hands, serves as an accelerator for optimized well-being and feeds the good wolf.

Thank you so much for listening to this series. Remember that you can download a free Athena Principles overview at [athenawellness.com/action_plan](https://www.athenawellness.com/action_plan) to help you chart your unique path.

I’ll be back next time with the next installment of Reimagining Midlife Wellness. Until then, be well!

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[00:13:31] 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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