



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 239 – Three Lessons Learned in 2023**  
**January 3, 2024**

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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.

I've said numerous times on this podcast and in my blogs over the years that I love the promise of a new year. It's like opening a brand new journal, all those blank pages waiting for trails of ink to fill it up. There's that brief moment imagining what will be explored, discovered and expressed. It never gets old.

And here we are at the dawn of 2024. In all honesty, I'm not too sad to leave 2023 in the rearview. It was a year of big lessons and deep learning. There was some adventure. There were a number of things that had to be put on hold. And there was a big farewell to the patriarch of our family. Yeah, it was a full year.



There was also some interesting foreshadowing that I had completely forgotten about. Last year at this time, I wrote a journal entry imagining what 2023 would be like.

I was feeling some trepidation about the upcoming year and I wasn't sure why. The image that came to mind was of a phoenix rising. And right there in my journal were the words, "Culmination and new beginnings." I had no idea just how true those words would prove to be.

So what I thought I'd share today is the review I undertook, along with three lessons I learned in 2023. Then as your takeaway, I'll briefly describe the process so you can give it a try, if you'd like. Then I'll wrap up with some thoughts on 2024. And spoiler alert – it feels a lot lighter.

### **[00:02:23] Lesson #1 – Just Do It!**

No, this isn't a commercial for Nike. There was a time when I was preparing for endurance events where I changed the phrase to become a training mantra, which was "Just Did it!" It kept me motivated at the time.

Here's the backdrop to the lesson. This phrase symbolizes how I burned through the fear I felt at the beginning of 2023. I always feel better when I take action. So I started off last year by challenging myself to one big business objective, to teach my new class [\*From Type A to Type Be, How to Mindfully Descend the Corporate Ladder and Invite What's Next.\*](#) And also one big personal intention, which was to take my first solo cross-country van trip.



Those small steps did little to ease the fear, but they did help me face it. And I'm happy to say that not only were both activities successfully completed, I learned so much in the process.

From a business perspective, I learned what worked and what didn't work for students. And I learned that I get incredible satisfaction coaching those students along the way. It was also wonderful to see that students from various professional backgrounds can benefit from what I have to offer and they can implement the material in many different ways with excellent outcomes.

From a personal perspective, I learned that I could cover 7,500 miles in two and a half weeks, including retreat time with my writing friends. The time on the road gave me time to reflect and it reminded me how much I love traveling like a turtle, with a mini-version of home in the back of my vehicle. I was reminded how beautiful this country is, how welcoming its citizens are, and how grateful I am to have the ability to experience it all.

Here's the lesson. None of it would have been possible without taking that first step, putting a stake in the ground and declaring, "This is what I intend to accomplish."

### **[00:04:48] Lesson#2 - The Importance of Presence**

Someone once told me that death is personal, meaning it will be the experience that person needs it to be. So it will be different for everyone. And I've found this to be very true.



I've had the honor to be with three family members as they passed, each one was different. But you can never prepare for death's unique unfolding.

Here's the backdrop to the lesson. My father lived a long life. And he was healthy, independent and had his mental faculties for more than 101 years. When his physical abilities began to degrade a bit, he decided he was done. He had lived his life. And as a family, we were at peace with his decision and promised to support him.

What we didn't expect was the intensity of the caregiving as the months progressed. And I can't tell you how grateful I am for having a brother and sister who were united in the caregiving process.

Here's the lesson. In the middle of chaos, amidst uncertainty and doubt, there is always a quiet voice that knows the way. Always. It's unfailing. The reason why we miss it so often is because the access point is stillness.

It seems counterintuitive. But in the early days of caretaking, something told me to sit in the early morning quiet for 10 minutes each day when I got up. It turned out to be my anchor. And it's a practice that I've continued.

That simple practice gave me the presence I needed to be with my dad, to bear witness to his process, and to absorb the depth of the experience.

### **[00:06:53] Lesson #3 - The Art of Integration**



Here's the backdrop to the lesson. My father passed peacefully on October 23rd, surrounded by his three children, and was laid to rest on the 27th. A few days later, it was Halloween. And I found myself in the company of my great nieces, six-year-old twins dressed as princesses.

This was my signal that it was time to leave the surreal summer and autumn behind and gently return to my routine.

November was a quiet time that included working and working out at home, preparing and enjoying healthy meals, and resting. By the end of the month, I was hosting a lovely Thanksgiving gathering and my best friend, who flew in from the west coast, joined us.

In December, it was time to mindfully return to my full routine. I went back to CrossFit and met some new professional friends as part of a three month business course I'm excited about. The holidays were just the right mix of family time and retreat time.

Here's the lesson. I mindfully planned a full week of retreat time from December 26th through the New Year. This included a ProLon fast, which I've talked about before on this podcast. [I'll link up that episode in the show notes if you'd like to learn more.](#)

The great thing about fasting this way is I can be completely focused because there's no need to shop and prepare meals for five days. And when I break fast on



day six, not only am I lighter physically, my mind and spirit are renewed as well. It's a lovely way to begin a new year.

But this time, I also knew how important it would be to integrate all the experiences 2023 offered. So I fasted from media as well, avoiding the news in all of its forms. I only listened to and watched things that nourished my spirit. And I found some cool Spotify instrumental playlists along the way.

This is how I found the time to look back at my calendar and through my journals as I sat by the fire one rainy afternoon. I spent a few hours weaving the experiences into the fabric of my being, allowing them to just be as they are knowing there was deep meaning and purpose in it all. It gave me perspective, closure, and deep peace.

And in this stillness something surprising happened. Like tender green shoots that break through the soil after a long winter, some exciting ideas to explore in 2024 began to surface.

Integration is an important part of any healing experience. As I look back on the past few months, I see all the necessary elements found their way to me. There was connection where we shared stories and memories; we honored past traditions and created new ones; and there was creative expression through writing.



**[00:10:21]** Interestingly enough, these lessons and tools are also helpful to make sense of world events, which have been both dark and light, tragic and triumphant.

We had our share of war and earthquakes, floods and drought, social and political polarity. But it was also a year of medical and technological breakthroughs and deep space exploration. We witnessed unbelievable acts of compassion, social progress, and countless stories of human resilience.

As we welcome 2024, I hope the lessons of the last year fortify us and give us hope as we continue to build a future for generations to come, like those little princesses that gave me a gentle nudge on Halloween just by being their radiant selves.

**[00:11:20]** And now your takeaway. It's not too late to take one last look at 2023 and it's really simple. Pour your favorite beverage, find a quiet location where you won't be disturbed for a bit.

On a clean page in your journal, write the year at the top and the first three months of the year across the page in three columns. Skip several lines and repeat for the next three months, and continue until you have the months arranged in a 3 x 4 grid.

Then take a look at your calendar or however you keep track of your appointments and activities. Make notes on your grid under the month heading of standout experiences. For example, under my January heading, I listed my father's 101st



birthday celebration, the launch of my class, and a writing circle that I joined that month.

In addition to your calendar, you can flip through your journal, if you keep one, and the pictures on your phone can also be a wonderful prompt.

Once you've gone through the year, look for themes or lessons. How would you summarize your year? And how can you metabolize those experiences - what feels right for you?

It could be as simple as saying, "Thank you." You can take a walk or have a conversation or journal about what you've learned, how it impacted you, and how you've grown as a result.

**[00:12:56]** As we bring this episode to a close, I hope you feel inspired to review where you've been this past year and allow those lessons to inform where you're headed in the new year.

For me, there are new business opportunities and offerings that I'm excited to explore. I'll be celebrating a milestone birthday. And there are new adventures on the horizon, some I know and some are yet to be revealed.

If last year was about culmination and new beginnings, this year was about embracing those new beginnings with Soulfulness. From a business perspective, the word that comes to mind is "Ignite." And from a personal perspective, it's about inviting in some "Universal Magic," why not?





May your new year bring you an abundance of blessings and be filled with love, good vibes and well-being. I'm wishing you a wonderful 2024!

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**[00:14:03] 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!

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**[00:15:05] [END OF AUDIO]**