



The Athena Wellness Podcast

Episode 244 Unlock Your Next Life Chapter, Part IV - A Post-Corporate Journey

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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 as you create your next chapter, turning life transitions into transformation.

[00:00:33] Kathy: Hello and welcome friends. Thanks so much for joining me.

As I mentioned last episode, if I could sum up the biggest lesson I've learned since leaving my longtime corporate career behind, it's this. The skills that make you successful in one chapter of your life are rarely the ones that you rely on as you create the next chapter of your life.

This is what inspired this series of podcasts focused on sharing some tools you can add to your toolkit to unlock your next chapter and navigate the unfamiliar territory ahead.

We've covered a lot so far, such as using discontent as a springboard to move forward. And then we explored elements of your origin story and how it's led you to where you are today.



In the last episode, we talked about how to reframe parts of that story that are no longer serving you while leveraging the parts that do. And we explored a format called the hero's journey, where you depart from your routine life to follow a call to action, and you're initiated in some way before returning home to share the wisdom you obtained.

I left you with a challenge to reflect on what's resonated with you throughout this series and identify a call to action that intrigues you. It could be something within reach, like starting a writing practice or running a local 5k race. Or it could be something much bigger, like tackling a lifelong dream. Whatever is calling to you in this moment, keep it in your mind as you listen to this episode so you can put it into action.

[00:02:25] Let's start with three reasons why viewing your intentions through the hero's journey lens is so impactful.

The first is **awareness**. When you overlay your story on this format, you'll discover new things and deepen your understanding of yourself, including insights relating to your motivation, values, strengths and challenges.

The second is **clarity**. These new insights will help you focus on your aspirations and take initial steps as you accept your call to action.

And the third is **resilience**. With understanding and focus comes the willingness to try new approaches and the confidence that you will be able to handle the obstacles you face along your journey.



[00:03:15] Now it's time to get practical. I'm going to give you a personal example of how I used this process so I could visualize my life in a new way. Here's the narrative in the hero's journey format with some commentary and takeaways for you. Here we go...

Years ago, Kathy heeded the call to join the corporate world and successfully navigated its twists and turns for more than three decades. She was at the top of her game having reached the top rung of her professional ladder.

The practical path forward was to ride it out, to reap the benefits of all the hard work she put in over the years. But something else seemed to be tugging at her.

And it showed up in vague and unusual ways. She felt it when she got up in the morning and wondered what it would be like if her days were not filled with back to back to back meetings. She felt it as she packed for the next business trip and wondered what it would be like to feel deeply rooted in one place instead of scattered around the globe. And she felt it when she was about to give a big presentation and wondered what it would be like to speak on a completely different topic that intrigued her.

This felt a little like a siren call, a new way that felt appealing but fraught with potential danger, the danger of leaving the comfort of what's known. So she spent several years using her personal time to intentionally explore things that intrigued her. She took classes and workshops and read books. She journaled and kept coming back to one recurring question, "How would I like to spend my time?"



She began to think of this experiment as a paid sabbatical of sorts, a way to safely try on different personas in the privacy of her own home. While she had no idea what she'd like to do, as she tried different things, she got clear on what she didn't want to do, such as having to operate under anyone else's schedule or execute someone else's priorities.

In time, she realized what she did want. Kathy's intention was to start a business that was creative, lucrative and location independent.

She knew she had to get more specific, so she spent time reflecting on her sabbatical experiment and realized all of the things she loved fell under the broad umbrella of wellness. A quick Google search led her to wellness coaching, and she completed a certification program within a year.

At that point, she was still working full time in the corporate world and had no intention of leaving the comfort of her known world. Then came the inciting incident. Her boss announced his retirement, and she was faced with the choice of whether or not she wanted to invest the time to build a new professional relationship.

She knew instantly on a deep level that if she had to prove herself to a new boss, she'd rather use that energy to prove to herself that she could create and grow a viable business.

But it wasn't without doubt and hesitation. Although she went back and forth in her mind over a period of months, she also used that time to take action on a parallel track, one that would last for more than a year.



On weekends, she created her business infrastructure, including the LLC, business cards, bank accounts, and so on. Within a month, the first of several wise teachers crossed her path, this one in the form of an entrepreneurial business coach that she hired to help her establish a website and a blog.

While her inner critic still voiced warning and displeasure, she kept moving forward on this parallel track. She decided to write a wellness book to help establish herself in this new industry, and spent the next year setting the coffee pot for 3:45am to get an hour of writing in before heading to the office.

As the writing got underway, she shared her plans with her boss that she, too, intended to retire when she turned 55.

[00:08:01] I'm going to pause the story for a minute to bring us back to the hero's journey framework. What you've heard so far is the departure stage. Kathy was living a comfortable life and had a daily routine that included family, friends and career. Something was tugging at her though, and she began to explore it.

But it wasn't until there was an external disruption, the retirement of her boss, that she started to take action. While she weighed her options, there was a lot of doubt in her own mind wondering if she was tossing aside three and a half decades of hard work. But once she took some quiet action, the first of several wise teachers crossed her path and helped her see the possibilities beyond what she was capable of seeing herself.

Back to our story.



[00:08:57] Once she made her plans known, there was no going back. She had to make her plan work. Her company asked her to stay for an additional six months, so she had a bit more time to figure it out.

She used her last day of employment as a goal to finish her book manuscript, hiring an editor to work with her to make sure that she hit that goal. On her first day as a business owner, she created a six month publishing plan and delivered the book on time.

In her new life as an entrepreneur, she relied on all of this activity to keep her logical left-brained self occupied. But there were challenges at every turn. There was no longer a team, an administrative assistant, or the name recognition of a Fortune 250 company to rely on. She was responsible for determining and delivering on every task, from business proposals to presentations to clearing the paper jams in the printer. When her first client needed to be billed, she needed to create the invoice.

Late nights at the corporate office were replaced with late nights in her home office. And there was a feeling that she'd never learned all she needed to know nor would there be time to get it all done.

[00:10:23] Time for a story pause. This is the second stage of the hero's journey framework, the initiation. Kathy has left ordinary life behind, crossed the threshold, and entered into the unknown. There's uncertainty everywhere and every task feels like a test.



But she meets allies along the way - those who helped her publish her book, invited her on their podcasts, and hired her to speak to their teams. At each step along the way, she's confronted with herself, feeling unsure but determined to move forward. She reminds herself to celebrate each small success, even if it's just to pause and remember that it wasn't all that long ago that a life like the one she's living now was just a dream.

[00:11:18] Back to the final chapter of our story.

Kathy's mission the first two years she was in business was to help professionals stay well as they ascended the corporate ladder, which was the topic of her book. But as time went on, she realized she could be of service by helping professionals who were ready to descend the corporate ladder, just as she did. So she set her sights on creating a course and a coaching offering to help them.

It was a refinement of her original vision and one she couldn't have foreseen when she started her journey. And to this day, Kathy's fully engaged in her work, grateful that she unlocked her next chapter and created a post-corporate life she loves.

While the story is ongoing, we'll bring it to a close for our purposes by looking at this last phase of the hero's journey, the return.

It's clear that Kathy's external day-to-day life had changed, but her internal growth was even more profound. As she gained experience and integrated her learning, her focus shifted.



She became interested in helping others make the transition from successful professionals to creating an impactful future beyond corporate life. So she developed business offerings to align with this new mission.

[00:12:48] The point of this story, and your takeaway, is this: **The hero's journey is never ending. It's a spiral of experience and growth.**

When Kathy was still part of the corporate world, she could only see as far as publishing her book. It was enough to get her to the departure stage. And she was so busy getting her new business up and running in the initiation stage, that she didn't even realize there were so many paths that she could take to further her work.

When she did some reflection in the return stage, she decided to go back to the departure phase and create a new segment of her work, helping a different demographic of professionals. And at the time of this writing, she's firmly in the initiation stage of that work.

[00:13:45] I share this so you can release any preconceived notions of "getting this right." Grant yourself permission to be less precious with this process and practice with a manageable call to action.

Bring that call to action to mind and ask yourself these three questions:

1. How can I ready myself for a quick and easy departure?
2. What do I need in order to initiate, to cross the threshold and begin?
3. How will I feel when I return from that journey, wiser than when I began?



As we wrap up this episode, I want to thank you so much for joining me for this mini-series. I hope it's inspired you to unlock your next life chapter and take steps to create your dream post-corporate life.

If you're interested in exploring the themes we covered today and would like a guide for this soulful journey, please do reach out. My coaching services are listed on my website and you're always welcome to reach out via email. I'll link all that up in the show notes. And as always, I look forward to connecting with you.

[music] **[00:15:07] 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.

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Until next time, be well!

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[00:16:09] [END OF AUDIO]