



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 245 – Approaching Life as a Discovery Draft
February 14, 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 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.

Before we get started, I wanted to mention that I have a new free resource for those who are thinking of leaving their professional careers and considering what's next. I'll tell you more about it as we close the episode. And I'll also link it up in the show notes.

But let's begin today's episode. We're six weeks into the new year, and I'm still surfing that wave of new energy. If you're riding in a current of positive energy as well, this episode will help you channel it. And if you're not feeling it, I hope this will provide a little boost and encouragement to get moving in a direction that feels good to you.

So here we go.



[00:01:23] I experienced something unexpected right after the new year began. I was listening to a podcast I check out from time to time while doing some work around the house. The host was interviewing an author and it hit me. The next Athena Wellness project is going to be a book!

I grabbed my notebook and jotted down a few notes on the premise. It was very different than my previous book, which intrigued me. Equally compelling was how this idea was making me feel. Words won't do it justice, but I was just so curious and excited, just captivated by this idea.

I'm sure you can relate sometimes when you get an idea that feels so enthralling, but as time goes on your interest or your commitment to seeing it through kind of fades. And I thought, well, maybe that's what might happen here. So I decided to let it ride and see how I felt as time passed.

But the feeling didn't diminish. In fact, the more I tried to step back, the more insistent the idea became until it was undeniable that I needed to give writing this book some serious thought.

So I started doing some research on writing this type of book. And within minutes, I found someone who might be able to support me during this project. And as you know, I'm a big proponent of working with coaches who can help me reach a goal as efficiently and effectively as possible.

And serendipitously, she was offering an introductory workshop in January, which I participated in. It went so well that I've committed to working with her in a facilitated online course. She uses the same type of teaching method I use in



my course, combining video and coaching. So I'm really enjoying it. I'm three weeks in and I should have a book outline completed by the end of March.

[00:03:39] That experience is the backdrop for what I want to share with you today, which are two concepts I learned from her that relate to why writers don't finish their projects. But as I reflected, I thought, you know, these ideas can be applied to wellness, and also to navigating life transitions.

One is about comparison, and the other is about a mindset shift. We'll start with comparison, and we'll use the metaphor of an iceberg.

I'm sure you've seen pictures of icebergs, these big chunks of ice that break off from a glacier and float in open water. They are majestic sites. And it's estimated that approximately 80 to 90% of an iceberg is submerged underwater, making it impossible to get a sense of its vastness. And because most of it is unseen, it's easy to underestimate its power.

So what does that have to do with writers who are trying to finish a book draft or someone who's trying to increase their level of wellness or experiencing a life transition?

Writers who are beginning their projects often look to their favorite books and authors for inspiration. And among the things they see are published books, beautiful prose, a story that works, reader reviews, and awards.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg, the 10%, that you can see.



What's included in the 90% that's hidden from view? Things like years of building their craft, multiple rounds of editing, feedback, working with agents, editors, and publishers, building a writer's platform, engaging with readers, and on and on.

Her point was that if you compare yourself to the visible part of someone else's iceberg, you'll get discouraged before you even begin writing your book.

And we do this in other areas of our life as well. It's natural to see people who are at the top of their field and want to emulate them. It's a great source of inspiration. But we can't expect to operate at their level, especially if we're just starting.

[00:06:13] We'll talk about ways that you can work with this concept. But first, let me share the second idea that has to do with mindset.

I recently heard a statistic relating to would-be authors. Any guesses on the percentage of people who want to write a book but never finished their draft? Ninety-seven percent! Ninety-seven out of 100 people never finished their draft. Isn't that incredible?

And the reason why so many books remain unfinished is that the writer expects their first draft to be excellent. And speaking from experience, that is just not feasible.

But why isn't it feasible? Because both the story and the writer are growing, changing and evolving. There's no way to know where the story is leading. So to set expectations based on limited knowledge at the beginning of a writing project is to set yourself up for discouragement and failure.



This was a really good reminder and reality check for me, because I can get caught up in making anything I do the best it can be. And that means, whether consciously or not, I can set unrealistic expectations for myself.

But now I've come to understand that when I sit down to write this draft, I won't know how the plot will twist and turn, or how the characters will change, or what the ultimate takeaway will be for readers. I have an idea of the story components, but I'm just as excited to see how it all turns out as, I hope, readers who will one day hold the book in their hands.

And it's such a relief to know that a good first draft is not the goal and the quality of that initial output is not tied to my ability as a writer. What does indicate whether or not I'll be a successful writer is my willingness to get the first draft done so the real work of feedback and revision can begin.

A common way to think about this type of first draft mindset is to refer to it as a *discovery draft*. I can't tell you how much I love that term, because that's what I'll be doing when I begin to turn the outline into prose. I'll be uncovering what the story is actually about, including how character arcs evolve and plots unfold.

And it takes so much pressure off – allow the story to reveal itself instead of me thinking I need to craft the story. So my job becomes showing up to allow that process to happen.

So I've shared two things that have helped me move forward on a major project, a book that unexpectedly appeared on my radar screen.



[00:09:30] But let's get to your takeaway and how both the iceberg and the discovery approach can be applied to either a new wellness intention or a life transition.

Here are three things to consider:

- 1. Approach any new endeavor with curiosity.** Set an expectation upfront that this new process will be messy and uncomfortable. Allow the feelings of discomfort and shift your focus to the next step. And repeat with the flexibility to assess and make adjustments as your journey unfolds. The way to set yourself up for success is to commit to embrace a beginner's mindset and move forward knowing that it's not going to be perfect.
- 2. Value the invisible work.** There's two parts to this. The first is to enjoy the woodshedding part of the process, meaning the investment you're making in learning and practicing something new. It's about the effort, not the outcome, especially in the beginning. Which brings me to the second part of this. Be mindful as you're looking at others, that you're just seeing their outcome and not their effort, the visible 10% of their iceberg. And don't let that discourage you.
- 3. Seek inspiration.** Seek out others who inspire you and learn all you can. It's one of the reasons why I love to read memoirs and biographies. I love understanding what seeds were planted early on, who inspired the people who are now inspiring me, and what fueled them to keep going, especially when they felt discouraged.



[00:11:29] As we bring this episode to a close, I hope you'll consider working with these two strategies. I found that they take the pressure off, so I can focus on what matters most – getting my first discovery draft done by the end of this calendar year. But I've also played with the concepts in my own wellness practices and my business projects as well. I hope they bring you just as much value.

And speaking of value, at the beginning of this episode I mentioned I have a new resource. It's a short guide titled [**Five Questions to Explore a Soulful Second Chapter**](#). You can download it for free. It's a brief but beautiful PDF with lots of room for you to take notes as you reimagine your life and invite what's next.

You can simply go to the web address [**athenawellness.com/reimagine**](http://athenawellness.com/reimagine). And I'll also put a link to it in the show notes along with our email address. Check it out and please do let me know what you think. I always love connecting with you.

I'll leave you today with the words attributed to John Gardner, who was the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in President Lyndon Johnson's cabinet.

“Life is an endless unfolding, and, if we wish it to be, an endless process of self-discovery, an endless and unpredictable dialogue between our own potentialities and the life situations in which we find ourselves. By potentialities, I mean not just intellectual gifts, but the full range of one's capacities for learning, sensing, wondering, understanding, loving, and aspiring.”

Have an amazing day, and I'll see you next week.



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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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[00:14:33] [END OF AUDIO]