



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 246 – How to Leap Into Your Next Life Chapter, Part I**  
**February 21, 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. It's a short guide titled *Five Questions to Explore a Soulful Second Chapter*. It's perfect if you're thinking of leaving your professional career and you're wondering what to do next. You can download it at [athenawellness.com/reimagine](https://www.athenawellness.com/reimagine). And I'll also put a link in the show notes so you can check it out.

**[00:01:06]** Let's begin today's episode. If you're listening in real time, it's February and an unusual one at that. It's leap year, so we get an extra day this month.

This thought brought me back to a particular moment that will be obvious in a bit. It's a time when I was working with a coach when I was considering what was next for me and reimagining my own life. I was fully entrenched in the corporate



world back then when I committed to work with this coach for three months to learn how to bring Athena Wellness to life.

And boy did she put me to work! To start she had me create my website from scratch. And then she had me start my blog. And then I outlined my book. She also gave me reading assignments, which leads to today's topic.

One of the books she had me read was *The Big Leap* by Gay Hendricks. Turns out he wrote a follow up book called *Your Big Leap Year*, which was recently released and I just bought. By now I'm sure you can see the link in how thinking about an extra day this month led me down memory lane and back to this book. It's fascinating how the mind works.

But back in 2018, when I first read *The Big Leap*, it had a major impact. It influenced how I structured my company and my days once I left corporate life behind. The recommendations were practical, but like any good advice they take practice to implement. And now that I reread the book, I can see where I can go deeper with the concepts today to prepare for my next leap.

And I think you'll find value in this information as well. So my plan is to share some thoughts on the premise and principles included in the original book, *The Big Leap*, during today's podcast. And then on next week's show, we'll talk about specific strategies you can consider implementing from his newest offering, *Your Big Leap Year*.

**[00:03:28]** We'll start with a little about the author.



Gay Hendricks has written more than 40 books, including *New York Times* bestsellers. He earned his PhD in counseling psychology from Stanford, was a professor at the University of Colorado for 20 plus years, and has shared his wisdom with Oprah, CNN, CNBC and many other media outlets. I've included a link to his website [hendricks.com](http://hendricks.com) in the show notes, so you can check out his books and his Institute.

Now to the book, I should share that the subtitle to *The Big Leap* is *Conquer Your Hidden Fear and Take Your Life to the Next Level*. Pretty powerful stuff.

The book's premise revolves around the concept of an internal thermostat that we all have, that sets limits on our happiness by defaulting back to familiar, secure settings once we reach a new height. Hendricks calls this the Upper Limit Problem and details how we can self-sabotage our success and well-being because of our limiting beliefs and fears.

He offers a framework to help us overcome these limitations so we can take our big leap in life and reach our full potential. These steps include identifying the source of your Upper Limit Problem, understanding your activity zones, and creating new leap skills.

**[00:05:08]** Let's talk a bit more about each one.

1. **Identifying your Upper Limit Problem.** And these are areas where you've been limiting your success in life. Think about the times when you felt that you're not good enough or you're playing it safe or you feel the doubt of



imposter syndrome. Or you establish goals that are so high, you set yourself up for failure.

2. **Understanding activity zones.** And this is about the types of activities that you're spending your time on. Hendrix suggests that there are four activity zones, which are your zones of incompetence, competence, excellence, and genius. And I'll speak more about each in a bit.
3. **Creating new leap skills.** These skills help you break through your limitations and spend time in your genius zone. They include things like awareness, appreciation, self acceptance, intention, and focused action.

**[00:06:17]** Now that you have a basic understanding of the framework, let's circle back to the activity zones, why they're important, and how you can use them as you're designing your next chapter. And I'll share some insight into how I use them as well.

Keep in mind as I go through the four zones that I'll start with the zone that you want to minimize and end with the zone that you want to maximize.

1. **The zone of incompetence.** This zone includes activities that others can do better than you and when you do them, they leave you feeling frustrated and drained. These are skills that can be delegated or outsourced. For me, these activities include bookkeeping, tax preparation, and IT support. A strategy for you would be to find ways to minimize your time in this zone and refocus that energy.



2. **The zone of competence.** This zone includes activities you can do, but don't bring any fulfillment. This is a place of comfort, but not of growth. Too much time here can lead to stagnation or boredom. For me, these activities include editing audio or video, and handling business administration, things I'm quite capable of doing, but I know my time is better spent elsewhere. A strategy for you would be to find ways to delegate, automate or streamline these tasks and refocus that energy.
3. **The zone of excellence.** This zone includes activities you excel at and enjoy. It can be a very rewarding place, but it may not bring long-term fulfillment, and you'll never realize your true potential here. For me, I was operating in this zone at different times in my corporate career, especially in the later years. But no matter the company nor the size of the paycheck, internal audit and risk management could never bring me the same level of fulfillment that I feel today working at Athena Wellness. A strategy for you is to recognize that while it's possible to enjoy these times of mastery, there's another level within you to explore.
4. **The zone of genius.** This zone is where the magic happens. It's where you use your unique talent and work in flow making contributions to the broader world. It's where you experience your full potential and feel deeply fulfilled. For me, I feel I'm getting closer to being in this zone more often, but it's been quite a journey. A strategy for you would be to spend more time in this zone and we'll talk about how to do this in small increments in next week's episode.



**[00:09:34]** Here are a few things to keep in mind as you consider *The Big Leap* framework.

The first is that zones are not linear. You don't start at incompetence and then move your way up through genius. You're operating on all levels throughout your day. The key is awareness, to have an honest assessment of where you're spending your time, why you're spending your time there, and the impact it's having on your energy and long term success.

The second is the overall goal is to spend more time in your zone of genius by decreasing the time you spend in other zones. This leads to daily choices that are aligned with your view of long term success. The key here is a patient, balanced approach.

And lastly, the only way to move toward your zone of genius is to step outside of your comfort zone. And yes, this can be uncomfortable, but growth is required to get to your zone of genius.

**[00:10:46]** Here's why I found this framework so helpful when I was thinking of leaving corporate life. It was this very passage from the book:

*"The temptation is strong to remain in the zone of excellence. It's where your own addiction to comfort wants you to stay. It's also where your family, friends and organization want you to stay. You're reliable there, and you provide a steady supply of all the things that family, friends and organizations thrive on. The problem is a deep, sacred part of you will wither and die if you stay inside your zone of excellence"*



And mic drop... The truth of that still takes my breath away.

**[00:11:41]** And now your takeaway. As you contemplate your next big life transition, your next big leap, consider using this framework. It can give you clarity so you can make the best choices for yourself:

- Clarity that includes the time that you're spending in your comfort zones of competence and excellence;
- Clarity that includes the patterns of self-sabotage that compromise your Upper Limit Problem;
- Clarity that includes the types of unique activities that are in your zone of genius; and
- Clarity that includes ways to make aligned choices to spend more time in your zone of genius.

According to Hendricks, it's this process that leads to a deeply fulfilling life. He says this, "Liberating and expressing your natural genius is your ultimate path to success and life satisfaction. Your zone of genius is the set of activities you are uniquely suited to do."

**[00:12:55]** Here's a quick summary of what we covered today. We briefly reviewed the Upper Limit Problem and spent some time understanding the four zones where you can spend your time. Next week we'll get more tactical and share some practices that you can implement to help you spend more time in your zone of genius.



**[00:13:18]** As we bring this episode to a close, I'd like you to consider two questions to prepare for next week's episode:

1. Where have I been limiting success in my life?
2. How much time am I spending in each of the four zones?

Next week, we'll look at ways to build your zone of genius skills, especially intention and focused action.

I'll leave you today with a closing passage from *The Big Leap*:

"Here's my wish for you. A life journey blessed with many moments of discovery. Going forward on your path, may your every day be filled with much practical magic and many everyday miracles. May you transcend each and every one of your upper limits. And long may you glide on the high currents of love, abundance and creative contribution."

Have an amazing day. And I'll meet you right back here next week.

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**[00:14:27] 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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**[00:15:29] [END OF AUDIO]**