



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 248 – Coaching Conversations: From a Full Life to a Fulfilling One
March 6, 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.

[00:01:07] Let's begin today's episode. I'm excited to announce a new segment we're introducing today. It's called Midlife Coaching Conversations. And the topics are inspired by listener, client and student questions I receive – ones I think you'll be interested in learning more about.



And if you have a topic you'd like me to cover in a future episode, drop us a line at hello@athenawellness.com.

Today's theme comes from something I've been noticing, not only with my clients and students, but with friends and family as well. And I think the reason why it's becoming so apparent in my world is I'm experiencing something similar.

[00:01:50] Here's the trend I'm sensing: The source of motivation in our professional and personal lives is shifting. Put another way, the things that once drove us forward are changing. We're no longer looking for a life that's full of activity and stuff. We're looking for a life that's fulfilling.

This can be attributed to maturity and what we've already achieved, but there are also deeper undertones. So let's look at both.

The first is maturity, the natural process of aging. Our needs shift as our life evolves. The first half of our lives are all about building our careers, starting our families and planning for a secure future. So it makes sense that most of our energy is aligned with more material concerns. And as Abraham Maslow wisely pointed out, once those needs are met, we can choose activities that support our self-actualization.

Another aspect of aging is that our own mortality becomes more prominent. Seeing our parents, family members and friends complete their life journeys can lead us to reevaluate our own priorities, and where we want to spend our energy and the time we have remaining.



[00:03:17] The second set of drivers, as I mentioned, are deeper. The ones that come to mind for me are increased self-awareness, generational drivers, and evolving values. Let's take a look at each:

- **Increased self-awareness.** This comes through introspection and reflection to better understand our life and world experiences. This process gives us the insight we need to refine our understanding of who we are and what matters most to us.
- **Generational drivers.** This is an interesting one because it will depend on the combination of when you were born and when your parents were born. I was at the very beginning of Gen X and we were known as the latchkey kids, experiencing new levels of independence because our parents worked. Match this up with my WWII generation parents who lived through the Depression. This combination, in general, creates an outlook of someone who is fiscally driven, discerning and pragmatic, coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit and a socially inclusive world view.
- **Evolving values.** We're living through turbulent and transformative times, which are accelerating a shift in values. In the last five years, we've witnessed seismic events affecting our physical and mental health, the workplace, ecology, the economy, politics, technology, and our social fabric.

Putting all of this together: With greater self-awareness of ourselves, our environment and our historical drivers, we can get clarity around our core values, the fundamental beliefs that guide our decisions, actions and life.



This shift that many, including myself, are experiencing is that we seem to be turning from the extrinsic to the intrinsic, from external recognition and rewards to internal validation. And I think the palette of what is a value has broadened to include deeper aspects of personal and spiritual growth, creativity, and social impact.

With that as a backdrop, it's easy to see why aligning with societal expectations, or climbing a predefined success ladder becomes less compelling, even if we get to the top rung. And it's also evident why alternative paths to a fulfilling life that includes activities and experiences that bring us genuine joy and satisfaction are so alluring.

[00:06:15] So how do you begin to identify and work with your own evolving values? I'll start with some places to look in your daily life, give you some suggestions on how you might incorporate your values into your work, and then end with your takeaway, which is a coaching exercise.

First, you'll need to identify your evolving values. And a great place to look at the fundamental principles that guide your decisions and actions are in familiar places where you feel comfortable. Here are five that come to mind:

1. **Daily routines.** Take a look at how you start and end your days, go about your work and household chores, exercise, and spend your downtime.
2. **Habits.** Take a look at the behaviors you repeat unconsciously, such as when you check your phone and social media, or when you numb out with alcohol or television.



3. **Beliefs.** Take a look at your convictions and established opinions and how they impact your thoughts, outlook and actions.
4. **Relationships.** Take a look at the dynamics and patterns in your interpersonal relationships, including your partner, family, friends and colleagues.
5. **Lifestyle choices.** Take a look at your dietary preferences, spending habits and recreational choices.

As you scan these areas of your life, look for where you've fallen into a comfort zone to identify where there's opportunity for growth and change. When you challenge your status quo, you open yourself up to personal development, resiliency, adaptability, stretch goals, and new aspirations. Disrupting your own status quo creates room for new experiences and moving beyond a life that's full to one that's fulfilling.

[00:08:23] The second way to work with your evolving values is to incorporate them into your work life. If you're looking for a next chapter career, here are five that come to mind:

1. **Entrepreneurship.** You might decide to start your own business that leverages your existing expertise or find a way to incorporate a passion into your vocation of choice.
2. **Board positions.** Put your leadership skills and strategic thinking to work as a board member. This is great for business leaders to stay current and engaged while making a difference for an up and coming business.



3. **Non-profit work.** This is a great way to apply your skills to a cause you care about while making an impact for the greater good.
4. **Mentorship and coaching.** You can find ways to share your knowledge and experience at any point in your career. It's impactful to others and rewarding to you.
5. **Creative pursuits.** When you daydream about how to spend the perfect day, what are you doing? Whatever the dream, a great place to start is to find ways to learn more about it and engage with others who love it as well.

The fun part of these seemingly intuitive opportunities is mixing and matching them. For example, you can combine creativity, entrepreneurship and nonprofit work by establishing an after school program that includes writing and meditation for at-risk kids. Or you can combine coaching, creativity and entrepreneurship by offering workshops to corporations that are looking to enhance innovation as part of their business leadership training.

[00:10:23] And now, your takeaway. Here's a coaching exercise to help you create an evolving values compass to move you from full, meaning achievement mode, to fulfillment, by aligning your values with your work.

This exercise is great if you want to further incorporate your values into the work you do today or if you're planning for a career transition. Here are the five steps:

1. Turn a piece of paper sideways so it's positioned in landscape format. Draw two large circles side by side and divide each circle into quarters. You can do this by drawing a line down the middle vertically and another



in the middle horizontally. Each circle will look like a pizza cut into four pieces. Label each point like a compass: north, south, east and west. The circle on the left represents your “full” state, that could be your current or last professional situation. And the circle on the right represents your ideal professional situation or your “fulfilled” state.

2. Start with the left hand circle. Under each direction, write a value with the most important one at the top under north. For example, in my last corporate role, I might have written *growth*, *impact* and *collaboration* under east, west and south with *security* at the northern point on the top of my compass.
3. Take some time to reflect on what would bring fulfillment to your professional life. What values rise to the top of the list? For example, when I started Athena Wellness, I would have written *creative*, *lucrative* and *location independent* under east, west and south with *freedom* at the northern point on the top of the compass.
4. The difference between the two compasses illustrates your shifting values. So now it's time to bridge the gap between the two diagrams. The objective is to determine how to incorporate your evolving values into your work. Suggestions include developing value-based skills and expertise, seeking new opportunities in your current firm, volunteering for values-based projects, and exploring values-based entrepreneurship or a side gig.
5. Create an action plan focused on at least one of the bridge gapping strategies - and then execute it.



[00:13:18] As we bring this episode to a close, remember that the feeling of being full can arise from numerous experiences. Perhaps you've achieved all you wanted in your current position. Or maybe you've reached a level of material success that you've wanted, yet you find it feels devoid. If so, I hope you'll consider working with the strategies and exercise we covered.

It's time to build a meaningful future filled with purpose, growth and impact, Moving beyond the climb to fullness to an enriching life of fulfillment.

I'll leave you today with the words attributed to Susan Polis Schutz.

"This life is yours. Take the power to choose what you want to do and do it well. Take the power to love what you want in life and love it honestly. Take the power to walk in the forest and be part of nature. Take the power to control your own life. No one else can do it for you. Take the power to make your life happy."

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

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[00:14:43] 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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[00:15:45] [END OF AUDIO]