



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 251 – Coaching Convo: Heart-Led Living, Part III – Cultivate Harmony**  
**March 27, 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.

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.

**[00:01:03] Kathy:** Hello and welcome friends. Thanks so much for joining me.



Let's continue our Midlife Coaching Conversation series inspired by a student who asks, "You always talk about living from the heart. What does that mean? And how do I do it?"

Last week, we explored ways to gently transition to heart-led living in ways that wouldn't upend your current life, but enhance it. We talked about how to experiment with this way of life and, most importantly, how to trust your heart. We concluded with three suggestions on how to begin to listen to your inner knowing.

Today we'll explore ways to help you cultivate a harmonious head and heart approach to your daily life, focusing on methods you can implement to encourage heart-led living, including a concept called interoception.

**[00:01:59]** Let's begin with a common challenge.

As you start to align with your heart, you may notice something interesting – an intensification of the power struggle between your rational mind and your inner desires. This can happen for several reasons:

1. **Fear of the unknown.** Our minds crave security and love predictability. When we open to other ways of being or challenge the status quo, our minds try to keep us in our comfort zone and this can show up as resistance to making any life changes
2. **Limiting beliefs.** When our heart begins to express its true desires, it can challenge our perceived capabilities. It can also surface hidden doubts that we're worthy of living in a more authentic manner.



3. **Lifelong conditioning.** Our upbringing, environment and culture all reinforce the importance of making practical and realistic decisions, regardless of whether or not it resonates with our core values.

If you're experiencing any of these feelings, know that they're real and trying to keep you safe. But there are ways of working through these emotions. Here's how to increase your confidence in your heart lead inner compass:

1. **Make micro shifts.** Think of the smallest possible heart-centered steps that you can take and start with the easiest one.
2. **Gather the evidence.** These small steps will give you the opportunity to experience a positive outcome.
3. **Building a solid case.** With each success, your mind will ease because it recognizes that it can play an important role to support what your heart desires.

With enough repetitions, you will feel the doubt and fear give way and the relationship between your head and heart will naturally become more harmonious.

**[00:04:19]** Harmony, in the context of heart-led living, refers to a state of balance and integration between your logical mind and emotional center. You experience harmony when your thoughts, feelings and actions are aligned, giving you a sense of peace and well-being.



Pay particular attention to that last phrase: *giving you a sense of peace and well-being*. Because that's the cornerstone of knowing when you're truly on track with your inner desires.

At its essence, harmony is not about silencing your head or your heart. It's about finding ways for them to work together. And there are incredible benefits when you learn to do so.

From a wellness perspective, harmonious living will reduce your stress levels, improve your well-being, and enhance relationships with yourself and others.

But harmonious living also helps you lead a heart-centered life. You'll notice:

- **Inner communication.** When your head and heart are working together, you get clarity on your deep desires and core values.
- **Increased decisiveness.** As you practice making heart led decisions, the process becomes more natural, and life feels more authentic and fulfilling.
- **Life flows.** While you'll never avoid life's challenges, you'll navigate them from a place of peace and begin to find true joy in the journey.

But even if the head and heart power struggle doesn't relent, you can still gain insight from that experience. In fact, it can be an important first step toward heart-based living by offering clues and opportunities.

Most importantly, heavy resistance can help you reveal the disconnect. You can use the practices we're going to discuss to gain a deeper understanding of your fears, limiting beliefs, and how your intuition is trying to connect with you. As you



do I remind you to remain self-compassionate by honoring your logical and emotional selves and the process of getting to know both more intimately.

Speaking of self-compassion, one of the most supportive things you can do for yourself is to allow your inner desires to be known and coexist in your current life, letting them develop in their own time. This slow unfolding also gets the rational mind comfortable that it will be working with the heart in an integrated, collaborative way.

**[00:07:19]** In the last episode, I left you with three ways to get to know your inner wisdom and suggested you give them a try.

One was to be in quiet contemplation and notice what surfaced. The second was to connect with your heart space when making a decision. And the third was to note any surprising whispers that surfaced for you.

All of these practices are related to something I call your inner compass, your inner GPS that intuitively knows the way forward. We're going to hone that inner guidance system with a concept called interoception.

Interoception is the ability to be aware of internal body sensations. We all have this ability and use it every day. When you feel hungry, out of breath, cold, fatigued, an itch or an ache, these are all examples of receiving cues from your body, interpreting them and taking action. You eat, you rest, put on a jacket, all in response to what you feel in your body.

Interoception has been called a sense, related to the sense of touch. And it answers the question, "How do I feel?"



On the topic of heart led-living, interoception can be a powerful tool to connect with your emotions and intuition. Here are some examples on how to connect with three elements of yourself: your physical body, your intuitive knowing, and your true nature.

*Your physical body.*

You can connect with your heart through your body by locating where you're feeling emotion. For example, when I feel stressed, my solar plexus will tighten, my breath will shorten, and my thoughts accelerate.

Over the years, I've gotten much better at noticing when this process initiates. When I feel that switch trip, I begin to shift that energy from my head, a place of fear, to my heart, a place of trust.

We'll talk about how to do this in a bit. The important thing to know right now is you can learn to feel, through interoception, when your head isn't serving you.

*Your intuition.*

I think of intuition as a magnetic pole, a sensation that is subtle, but very clear. As you hone your ability to connect with your intuition, it can become a powerful guiding force in your life, moving you toward what deeply resonates with your true self.

I believe that intuition isn't some other worldly capability. I think of it as a combination of how your subconscious is processing patterns, emotions and experiences, and then interpreting your environment through that lens. I think



the sense of certainty and knowingness that comes with intuition is from that deeply personal process that is happening through the heart space.

A simple way you can use interoception to hone your intuition is to try to identify your predominant emotion and then locate it in your body, much like I described how I feel stress as a tightening in my stomach area. Once you learn how to do this with emotions, you will be able to expand that process to connect with your intuition.

*True nature.*

The whole purpose of heart-based living is to rediscover and embrace your true nature. You do this by aligning your actions and decisions with your deepest desires, values and purpose. This is the key to a fulfilling life – to embody and express your true essence.

**[00:11:35]** Interoception will guide you to the path of your deepest self and help keep you on it. When you feel positive signals, such as the feeling of expansion, calm or ease, you'll know you're moving in a positive direction for you.

I'd like to emphasize that last point. Whenever I'm connecting with my inner guidance, it's always through a sense of calm and a next step that genuinely feels right for me in that moment, even if it's surprising. The deep knowing brings ease and a gentle sense of excitement about where I'm headed and what I'll discover along the way.

So keep that in mind as you practice with interoception. If the guidance is loud, commanding or urgent, it's coming from the egoic mind. Take a few breaths,



settle into your heart and try again. When you connect on a deeper level, you'll notice the shift in tone to be matter of fact and the timing to be less urgent, more in heart time.

**[00:12:49]** As we bring this episode to a close, I'd like you to practice with the concept of interoception by experimenting with how to locate emotion in your body.

Here are the steps:

1. Set aside 5 or 10 minutes when you wake. You can choose to sit, stand or slowly walk.
2. Take a few grounding breaths. Breathe in through the top of your head and exhale out through the bottom of your feet. Feel the energy flow through your body.
3. Focus on your head space and move that feeling of awareness down to your heart. I find the easiest way to do this is by feeling the breath come into my head and the exhale flowing out of my chest area. See if you can generate a warm feeling in your heart space.
4. Simply notice how your body is feeling. Where is it tight and constricted? Ask yourself what that might be related to and name the emotion. See if you can get an understanding of what spurred that feeling.
5. Thank your heart for the insight and see if you can ease the constricted feeling. Breathe the heart warmth into that space.
6. When you're ready, open your eyes. If you'd like, jot down a few notes.





By becoming more aware of subtle interoceptive signals, you can learn to interpret your body sensations and emotional cues, strengthening your connection with your intuition and using that guidance to cultivate harmony in your life.

Give that practice a try and next time we'll explore different ways to connect with your heart space.

I'll leave you today with the words of Mahatma Gandhi.

*"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."*

Enjoy the experimentation and let me know how it goes. You can always reach me at [hello@athenawellness.com](mailto:hello@athenawellness.com).

Have an amazing day and I'll meet you right back here next week for Part Four of this series on heart-led living.

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**[00:15:23] 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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**[00:16:25] [END OF AUDIO]**