



The Athena Wellness Podcast

Episode 252 – Coaching Convo: Heart-Led Living, Part IV – Daily Communication

April 3, 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 help you cultivate a harmonious head and heart approach to daily life, focusing on methods you can implement to encourage heart-led living, including a concept called interoception. And we concluded with an intuitive practice of locating emotion in your body.

Today, we'll talk about ways to connect with your inner knowing on a daily basis by exploring a range of options and creating a practice that's right for you. I love this topic because it's where we can start incorporating what we're learning and begin to experience the benefits of heart-based living. Let's start with the importance of building relationships.

[00:02:13] Bring an important relationship to mind, one that's filled with trust, understanding and respect. Now think of the main reason why this relationship thrives. My guess is because you're intentional in investing time and effort to nurture it.

Heart-led living is no different. It requires a conscious effort to build a strong and trusting relationship with yourself so you can create a space to connect with your inner compass, that place that guides you toward a full expression of yourself.

Nurturing, strengthening and investing in the relationship with yourself will pay dividends. The more you get to know yourself, the deeper your understanding of your values and desires. This helps you make more informed decisions that resonate with your inner truth, especially in challenging times. The byproduct is enhanced well-being and ongoing personal development.



As an added bonus, a strong relationship with yourself creates a resilient foundation for healthy relationships with others. All the practice you've had in getting to know yourself will ensure you're relating with others from a place of authenticity, open communication and healthy boundaries.

So how do you actually cultivate a thriving relationship with yourself? It comes down to two things: attention and consistency. And the best way is to create a dedicated time for quiet exploration.

I like to use the word *practice* to describe this time, but feel free to call it whatever you'd like. And you can pick any activity that works for you. Anything that acts as a bridge between you and your inner wisdom.

[00:04:17] Here's why your practice is essential for connecting with your intuition, which leads to a heart-based life:

- **Quiet the noise.** A practice is like a brief retreat from the onslaught of stimuli, which can make it difficult to hear your own guidance. In the quiet, you can more easily tune into your inner voice.
- **Attune to the signal.** Inner communication is subtle. Having a regular time to notice what's trying to get your attention in the form of feelings, dreams, gut feel or surprising synchronicities will build your intuitive muscle.
- **Put in the reps.** The more you practice, the clearer the messages and the deeper the trust in what you're learning. You'll begin to see patterns of listening, implementing and enjoying a successful outcome.



- **Be open to surprise.** As you get adept at your practice, you'll be surprised at the hidden gems you'll uncover in the quiet, buried desires and abandoned passions may resurface in new and exciting ways.
- **Practice is a verb.** What I love about my morning practice is that it sets the tone for a positive day and gives me ideas to put into action. If this is new to you, you'll be surprised just how active a quiet space can be. Some days, it's just a feeling of expanse. Other days, I get amazing ideas and insights I'm thrilled to explore.

Here's why I'm so passionate about daily practices – they are the most effective way to show up for yourself. If you trust the process and stay consistent, you'll see how your practice and your life unfold in supportive and surprising ways, empowering you to navigate your heart-based life journey with confidence and enthusiasm.

Now let's learn how to select the right practices for you at this time in your life. Usually what comes to mind when you think of wellness practices is some form of exercise, meditation or journaling. But there are countless choices.

It's important to select a practice that you look forward to doing. So let's explore some of the options that are available to you. And remember, you're looking for a way to be in a quiet, reflective space.

[00:07:09] Years ago, there was a great graphic published by contemplativemind.org called The Tree of Contemplative Practices. It illustrated



a broad range of practices that could be used to cultivate mindfulness, expand self-awareness, and connect with your inner wisdom.

That website is no longer active, so I can't link it up for you. But I can do my best to describe it. And as I do, you may find a new practice that you'd like to explore.

In the image, the tree is grounded in the earth with one main root labeled *Communication/Connection*, and the other root labeled *Awareness*. So you immediately get the sense that these practices have a strong foundation in the very things we're looking to strengthen within ourselves.

Each tree branch focuses on different aspects of inner exploration and personal growth. The seven branches are labeled: *Stillness, Generative, Creative, Activist, Relational, Movement, and Ritual*. As you can see, this is a far reaching tree with something for everyone.

Let's take the branches one by one:

1. **Stillness**, which focuses on quieting the mind. Practices include meditation, centering, grounding, and silence. This is ideal for anyone seeking to cultivate inner peace and focus. These practices help calm the mental chatter and create space for introspection.
2. **Generative**, with a focus on cultivating positive emotions. Practices include loving kindness, meditation, gratitude practices, and cultivating joy. This is ideal for anyone seeking to enhance happiness, compassion and positive emotion in their lives. These practices can help shift your perspective and foster inner peace.



3. **Creative**, which focuses on engaging the imagination and appreciating beauty. Practices include journaling, creating or beholding art, being in nature, dream exploration, and visualization. And this is ideal for anyone who connects with their inner world through beauty or artistic expression. These practices can spark inspiration, offer a deep appreciation for the world around you, and tap into intuition in a creative way.
4. **Activist**, with a focus on social justice and spiritual exploration. Practices include pilgrimages, non-profit work or volunteering, vigils and marches, and bearing witness. This is ideal for anyone who feels a strong connection to social justice and finds purpose in working toward a better world. These practices can connect personal growth with collective well-being.
5. **Relational**, which focuses on connecting with others. Practices include council circles, storytelling, deep conversation, and deep listening. This is ideal for anyone who thrives on social connection and learns best through interaction. These practices foster empathy, compassion, and building stronger connections with others.
6. **Movement**, with a focus on embodiment. Practices include walking meditation, walking in nature, yoga, tai chi, qi gong, and for me, CrossFit and running. This is ideal for anyone who connects with their inner selves through physical movement. These practices enhance body awareness and can release emotional tension.
7. **Ritual**, which focuses on creating sacred space. Practices include retreats, designing a personal space, and creating rituals. This is ideal for anyone



who finds structure and meaning in ritual. And these practices foster a sense of the sacred in everyday life, and can deepen self-awareness.

[00:12:04] That's quite a list isn't it? And I love how inviting these options feel.

As I mentioned, there's no way to link to this image anymore. But if you go to athenawellness.com/podcast, and click on Episode 252, you will be able to download the transcription that has all the information we just reviewed.

I also think it's important to mention that all of the activities on The Tree of Contemplative Practices are meant to take us back to the tree roots of deepening connection and expanding awareness. Even the practices that include other people, such as the branches of activist and relational, should be structured to include both group time and alone time. In other words, even though the activity, such as being at a retreat, is shared with others, that experience is meant to be reflective, not purely social.

The other thing I'd like to share with you is that this review gave me time to reflect on my own practices. In particular, I was struck by how many of these branches I now touch on a daily basis. This has shifted quite a bit over the years, both in terms of the practices I find supportive these days and how they're integrated into my daily flow. So know that this is meant to be a fluid process that grows with you. I think you'll find, as I did, the more you explore, the more you want to be in these spaces, because not only do they feed you, they bring deep joy.



[00:13:54] As we bring this episode to a close, I'd like you to think about the practices we explored and pick one to try. Find something that's enjoyable, not something you feel you have to do.

If you're at a loss, stick with the activity I shared in the last episode, which was a way to work with the concept of interoception by experimenting with how to locate emotion in your body.

Whatever practice you choose, try to engage with it each day until we meet again next week. By doing so, you will begin cultivating a deeper connection with yourself, making it a place of reliable, unwavering support, where you can take empowered action and make compassionate decisions.

I'll leave you today with the words of novelist Dean Koontz:

"Intuition is seeing with the soul."

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

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[00:15:09] 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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[00:16:11] [END OF AUDIO]