



## **The Athena Wellness Podcast**

### **Episode 255 – Coaching Convos: Heart-Led Living, Part VII – Empowered Choices**

**April 24, 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 how to harness and utilize the energy created in your stillness practice, much like a Jedi does. Today we'll talk about how to use that energy to make empowered decisions that are aligned and feel effortless.

Let's start with what empowered decision-making is, how and why it's used in the business world, and then related to our topic of heart-led living, adding yet another tool to your kit.

**[00:01:51]** Empowered decision-making was less a revolution and more of an evolution. It gained traction in the 20th century when management gurus, such as Peter Drucker, promoted the idea of decentralization and employee involvement in decision-making, tapping into the intellectual capital of the broader workforce.

The benefits of such an approach include increased engagement and a feeling of ownership, improved speed and agility, and better problem solving, all due to a streamlined approach that encourages those with the best understanding of the problem to propose solutions.

Of course, there are challenges with this method as well, including finding the right balance when giving the authority to make decisions and ensuring they're in alignment with overall goals. It's also important to have guardrails in place to mitigate the risk that sometimes people might make less than optimal choices. It's wise to invest the time to train decision makers and slowly build trust.

The point is that while empowered decision-making can be an effective tool, it requires an ongoing commitment to learning, adapting and implementing. And



much like the practices we've been discussing, this process can lead to more creativity, innovation and growth.

**[00:03:27]** But how does this decision-making business tool relate to heart-led living? Just like the business world thrives on decisiveness, your next chapter journey will be filled with forks in the road, where you'll need to make the best decision based on where you're going, not where you've been.

So instead of using empowered decision-making to collaborate with colleagues, what if you use it to collaborate with your inner wisdom? By doing so, you'll connect with your deeper sense of self and move beyond obvious datasets and lists of pros and cons to explore what's beneath the surface, such as unseen options and unconventional paths that bring deeper fulfillment.

Here's the basic heart-based decision-making framework I've worked with to prepare for and then navigate my post corporate journey:

1. **Identify the non-negotiables.** What are your next chapter core values?
2. **Gather information.** What are your gut feelings telling you?
3. **Isolate the overriding emotion.** For example, do you feel a sense of peace or excitement or resistance?
4. **Compare available choices to your non-negotiables.** How does each option align with your next chapter core values?
5. **Repeat for each option as needed.**

**[00:05:09]** This takes some practice. And I'll give you two examples to show how the process gets easier and more precise over time.



**Example #1.** I'm in my early 50s, fully engaged in my corporate life and holding a question about my next chapter, which was, "How do I want to spend my time when my corporate career comes to a close?"

Whenever I had some downtime, I'd explore some potential options. One thing that intrigued me was a vegan sports nutrition course offered by the Matthew Kenney Culinary Academy. I had visited the Academy while on a trip in Southern California the year before. When the Academy expanded to online learning, I enrolled.

Here's how I applied the framework:

- Identify the non-negotiables. Since this was early in my process, I didn't know what my next chapter core values were. I just knew I wanted to work for myself.
- Gathering information. What were my gut feelings telling me? I was nervous to make the class commitment because my professional and personal responsibilities at the time kept my schedule filled. The course required video classes, food shopping, food preparation, food photography, assignments, and a final project. Even so, I found along with the feelings of unease came curiosity and enthusiasm.
- Isolate the overriding emotion. Every time I thought about the course or did the work, I felt waves of excitement.
- Compare my choice to my non-negotiables. Here's what's interesting. Even though I didn't have a list of non-negotiables when I started, I got insight into what they were as I completed the coursework. For example, while I



loved what I was learning and proud of the work I submitted throughout the course, I learned I didn't want to become a chef, because I didn't want to have a fixed schedule anymore. That was the first insight that led me to my three non-negotiables. I wanted my post-corporate entrepreneurial adventure to be creative, lucrative and independent of time and location structure.

**[00:07:52] Example #2.** Years later, Athena Wellness is up and running. After spending two years promoting my book and creating the business infrastructure, I began to identify a number of potential opportunities. Which ones do I choose? Here's how I applied the framework:

- Identify the non-negotiables. My core values had not, and have not, changed. I still want my work with Athena Wellness to be creative, lucrative and independent of time location structures.
- Gathering information. One opportunity was to teach at a retreat center. As I learned more about the prospect, I felt honored for being considered, as well as anxious and unsure.
- Isolate the overriding emotion. Every time I thought about the possibility of traveling across the country and teaching at this facility, I felt nauseous.
- Compare my choice to my non-negotiables. When I did the comparison, I found that a match was possible. The potential opportunity was creative, and it was a paid gig. But it wasn't location and time independent. That said, it was only for short periods of time. But here's what tipped the scale. One morning when I woke, I imagined it was the day I was heading to the



airport to teach this course. I felt a deep sense of constriction and heaviness. Then I imagined the day that was actually ahead of me, one that consisted of preparing for a podcast guest. I felt expansiveness. Case closed for this opportunity. It was a definite no.

What I love about this framework is it doesn't diminish logic and reasoning. Rather, it allows for a harmonious alliance between the analytical mind and the intuitive heart. It's this dance that allows your heart to lead, while your mind informs, ensuring a balanced approach to identify the choices that resonate deeply.

And the framework is adaptable. Feel free to add your favorite practice to it to make it work for you. For example, in my second story, I added visualization, which proved to be incredibly insightful for me.

You might consider adding a form of meditation, journaling or spending time in natural surroundings to open and listen to your heart's true desire. Experiment with different ways of working with the framework and keep track of your decision points, the process you took, and the outcome. After you've tried different combinations, take some time to reflect on and implement what works best for you.

**[00:11:04]** As we bring this episode to a close, I hope you'll give this framework a try the next time you'd like to make a heart-based decision. It will help you evaluate the many possibilities in your next chapter and discern between the array of emotions that will surface along the way.



And remember, it's faith in the heart-based path and belief that your dreams are worth pursuing that create a next chapter that's a true expression of your unique self.

I'll leave you today with the words attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt.

*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."*

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

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**[00:12:01] 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!

[music] **[00:13:03] [END OF AUDIO]**