



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 069 – Embracing JOMO
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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 on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

00:30

Hello and welcome to Episode 69. Thanks so much for joining me.

At the core of the work that I do is to remind clients, listeners, readers and students of our natural predisposition toward well-being in mind, body and spirit; that we already have the wisdom, wellness and happiness we seek within us. And it's my job to help find inroads to that inner landscape through practices that invite stillness, so you can hear and implement what you already know. And I love supporting people along that journey.

One of the inroads to that wisdom is the act of simplifying by slowing down. We experienced this on a global level as we entered different phases of lockdown over the last 18 months. Now that we're beginning to re-engage with the world, we have choices to make: Will we resume the level of activity we once had? Or will we be making some changes?

Most importantly, what's the intention behind the decisions we make? Is it Fear Of Missing Out or FOMO? And if we decide to make different choices, how do we make them joyfully and maybe even experience JOMO or the Joy Of Missing Out?

And that's what we'll be exploring today. We'll cover:

- What is the Fear Of Missing Out and its antidote, the Joy Of Missing Out?
- How can simple living help you slow down and increase joy? and



- How can you experiment with simple slow living?

So sit back, take a nice long breath to ground yourself in presence, and let's get started.

Let's start with a few basic definitions. First, the Fear Of Missing Out, which is formally defined as "Anxiety that an exciting or interesting event may currently be happening elsewhere, often provoked by posts seen on social media."

And while the term FOMO was coined in the 2000s, the fear of not being included in something that others are experiencing is not new. It just wasn't fueled by social media. Way back in the analog days, when I was growing up, it was more about what your friends were doing and whether or not you decided to join them.

Sometimes there were conflicting family plans or an illness or an obligation that made us miss a group activity. And then we'd wonder what we didn't get to experience with our friends. Or it had to do with what activities to participate in, or who to date, or our first big decisions about college or work. All of those moments at life's crossroads can bring up what's now referred to as FOMO.

Those were simpler times. Today, we carry with us what can be an anxiety producing device all the time. What can feel like mindless scrolling to fill the time, takes us out of presence and focuses our attention on what others are doing, which can lead to social comparison and the fear of not keeping up. The emphasis on what's lacking in our lives can lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction, the stress of which can negatively impact our well-being.

But FOMO is not all negative. It can be motivating as well. It's been said that you can do anything, but you can't do everything. Life is about trade offs. And when you choose mindfully, it can be quite empowering.

Enter JOMO or the Joy Of Missing Out. JOMO is defined as "Pleasure derived from living in a quiet or independent way without feeling anxious that one is missing out on exciting or interesting events that may be happening elsewhere." The definition alone feels spacious, doesn't it?



05:06

JOMO is a mind shift. It moves you to a place where you can begin to say no to what you don't want to do, so you can spend more time doing what's fulfilling for you.

Developing this mindset takes practice. It begins with saying no to the things you know you don't want to do. It can be as simple as, "I appreciate the invitation, but I have other plans." You don't need to share what the other plans may be. They could be something like staying home and reading a good book.

If you're not sure what to say in the moment or you'd like some leeway to change your mind later, you can say that you need to check your schedule and you'll get back to them.

And if you're on the fence, spend a few private moments playing out both options. How would you feel if you accepted the invitation? What would it feel like to get ready for it? And how would you be feeling on the way home after it was done? On the flip side, what would it feel like to use some of that time to do something that you've been really wanting to do, even if it's getting a solid night of sleep? Those scenarios should give you some insight on saying yes or no. And it's been my experience that if it gets to that point, it's usually a no, but I'm just avoiding the conversation for some reason.

Of course, if you're invited to an event that resonates with you and you feel excited about it, say yes, get it on the calendar, and go and enjoy yourself. As you begin to build this discernment muscle, you'll come to learn that it can be joyful to say no, and you can feel content in the wake of that intentional decision.

07:00

Now let's talk a bit about how simple living can help you slow down and increase joy. Having lived in the New York City area my entire life, moving at a slow pace does not come naturally to me. On the contrary, for me *slow* was a four letter word and not the one that New Yorkers tend to favor.

Moving at the speed of light was a badge of honor. I accelerated in the name of productivity and kept pace with ever increasing expectations and demands. And I was successful in that model; I accomplished a lot. I even managed to wedge wellness activities in between in an ongoing effort to keep my well-being intact.



But I dreamed of the day when I could step off that hamster wheel. I spent so much time aligning my pace to what needed to be done, work deadlines and family obligations, that my circadian rhythm was a mystery. It took me decades to really get a sense of my own pace.

Even when I left the corporate world and started my own business, I was still caught in that networking trap, fearing that if I didn't say yes to a lunch invitation or a meeting, that it would negatively impact my new business. And while I caught glimpses, it took a global pandemic for me to get a sense of what my natural rhythms were and how to design my days more organically.

Once I started operating like this for a few months, here are five things that I noticed:

1. I'm at my physical and creative best in the morning. I work out early and then I get to my writing. If I wait until the afternoon, neither will happen or it will be more of a struggle.
2. I'm enjoying my days, my connections and my experiences. As a result, my stress levels have plummeted.
3. Slowing down has allowed me to focus and I get a lot done. I create quality work products with less personal impact. I'm more confident and relaxed during my days, even when facing hurdles or obstacles.
4. I work with my energy throughout the day. When I find myself mentally running in circles at the end of the day, I gently remind myself it's time to step away, and I do.
5. I feel centered and grounded. By being intentional in making commitments, I have more energy to expend on myself, with my loved ones, and when I choose to socialize.

10:00

I'm not alone. The Slow Movement, which promotes a cultural shift from living at a hectic pace, has been around for decades. It started with the Slow Food Movement that began in Italy in the 1980s in reaction to the proliferation of fast food in a country known for lingering over meals for hours. It spread to the US in the 1990s, finding a home in the Bay Area in chef Alice Waters' Slow Food Nation organization, which advocates slow and sustainable food. Since that time, the philosophy has broadened to include slow living.



Unlike its moniker, it's not about moving through life leisurely. Rather, it's about doing things well, at the right speed, and with enjoyment. At its core, the movement is about how to embrace inevitable change, with speed or with intention. The philosophy is broad-reaching, incorporating deliberate consumption, conversation, food, aging, education, media, art, fashion, finances, parenting, partnership, and travel.

The year 2020 gave us an indication of what slow living could be. The ordinary pace slowed to a halt, seemingly overnight. We saw the impact in our relationship to the environment, our supply chain, our work, and our families. And some of us were "in place" for the first time in our adult lives, experiencing the changing seasons and giving thanks and appreciation for the smallest things in life, which, of course, are actually the biggest.

So how do we incorporate some of what we learned from the last 18 months into our lives as we move forward? How do we leverage the benefits of slower living, like quality of life, deeper connections, community, belonging, fulfillment, and the positive impact on the environment and society?

Here are three initial steps to begin to make space for more joy:

1. Go analog to reduce the digital noise - and leave that space open.
2. Set boundaries to better manage expected response times - and leave that space open.
3. Say no to the things you really don't need or activities you don't enjoy - and leave that space open.

How much time will this save us? I'm going to put a link to an article that referenced a 2017 study. On average, we'll spend more than seven years of our lives watching television and more than five years of our lives on social media.

And what can we do with five years of time? We can climb Mount Everest 32 times. We can run more than 10,000 marathons. And we can walk our dogs more than 93,000 times.

13:44

And of course, **you can do this in small steps:**

- If you save 5 minutes a day, that's 30 hours a year;



- If you save 15 minutes a day, that's 91 hours a year;
- If you save 30 minutes a day, that's 182 hours a year; and
- If you save 1 hour a day, which is totally doable, that's 365 hours a year or 15 days a year!

I'd like to share an exercise that I've done that was quite insightful. I took a look at my calendar that includes personal activities and work commitments and meetings from 2017 to 2019 to analyze how I was spending my time and which of those activities are still impactful for me today. And I made some changes - it was really eye opening.

Here's what I don't miss: being over scheduled, the frenetic pace, the commutes, the back-to-back meetings, airports, rush hour heading into New York City, constantly going out for lunch or drinks, 5am workouts, little sleep, and the ever present hum in my head from the overwhelm.

And what have I gained from starting to implement a slower approach to everyday life? You may be surprised to learn that I probably work just as many or more hours now than I did in my post Wall Street corporate years. I am not the kind of digital nomad who works four hours a week and then spends the rest of her time sipping cocktails on some remote beach.

That said, I have more flexibility to work when I want than I ever had in my life. And several years into this entrepreneurial gig, that has *not* gotten old. I love and I'm grateful for that flexibility. And I'm very intentional with how I spend my most precious commodity - my time.

It's still hard to reassess and reinforce boundaries. And it's still hard to say no. I recently had to do this and it's not easy. But I continue to curate my life and my activities so they align with my values, because I know that although it's the road less traveled, it's my road.

15:30

So let's close this section with a few things to consider:

1. Your level of busyness is a choice and it can be amended.
2. Living more simply and slowly is about right pace with a focus on how to best spend your time to lead the life that feels good for you.



3. You can start downshifting by taking small steps.

How might slowing down change your life?

So let's talk about how we begin to move toward simple, slow living. I've shared this brief story before, but I feel it's still relevant.

My journey towards simple, slow living started by making space in my life at a time when I was at my busiest. I was a corporate executive at a Fortune 250 with global responsibilities, navigating personal changes, and caring, along with my siblings, for aging parents. I did not have time to sit on a cushion and contemplate life.

What I did have was five minutes each morning. And when my alarm sounded at 4am, I set the timer for five minutes, placed my hand over my heart and took a few deep breaths. My mantra was: "For the next five minutes, there's no one who needs you and there are no decisions to make."

It was a blissful five minutes that always ended too soon. But I was able to start the day intentionally and with gratitude for that space. It was my first step on a long journey to redefine my life and live in a way that aligned with my values and dreams. Those five minutes, that continued until I left my corporate life, expanded over time. I found myself looking at my then over-committed calendar and wanting more space for what I enjoyed.

18:46

It didn't happen overnight. It actually happened over years. But it happened. And it all began with those five minutes.

And then I started to take a little more time on weekend mornings to sip a cup of coffee in the early morning quiet. And then journaling was added to that time. And then there was the time spent out on the trails running or hiking, reconnecting with myself. And the momentum continued from there.

I share that story again so you know that no matter where you are in your journey, it is possible to start with five minutes and grow your practice from there.



I'd like to end with five questions that you can ask yourself to get started. They are:

1. What does simple slow living mean for me and what does that envisioned life look like?
2. What are my essentials, meaning the things that you can't live without and the things you'll say yes to. And what are my non-essentials, meaning the things that you can live without and the things that you'll say no to.
3. How can I create space in my day and life?
4. How is my balance of time that I spend alone, with loved ones, and outside?
5. What small step will make the biggest impact and how can I take it to continue my journey towards simple, slow living?

20:29

I'd like to leave you with three quotes today. The first is from author Tanya Dalton who wrote *The Joy of Missing Out, Live More by Doing Less*. She said, "We have to stop the glorification of busy. We need to change our mindset and redefine what it means to be productive. Productivity is not about doing more. It's doing what's most important. We need to stop trying to get more done and instead reset our focus on our own priorities. When we do that, our ideal lives can become our real, everyday lives."

The second is from Warren Buffett. He said, "The difference between successful people and really successful people is that the really successful people say no to almost everything."

And the third is from Calvin and Hobbes cartoonist Bill Watterson. By his hand, Calvin has said, "If people sat outside and looked at the stars each night, I bet they'd live a lot differently."

21:54

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!