



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 148 – The Birth of a Rite of Passage
September 7, 2022

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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 on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

[00:00:30] Kathy: Today's episode is brought to you by The Athena Wellness Academy, your resource for wholehearted living.

The Academy's featured offering is an online course called, *From 'Type A' to 'Type Be,' How to Mindfully Descend the Corporate Ladder and Invite What's Next*. This course is perfect for you if you're contemplating or navigating a professional transition, and it's available as a self study or with a small cohort of students facilitated by me, Kathy Robinson.

To learn more, I invite you to go to [AthenaWellnessAcademy.teachable.com](https://www.athenawellness.com) or click on the link in the show notes.



[00:01:21] Kathy: Hello and welcome. Thanks so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

There's a big life milestone on my horizon. I turned 60 in 2024. I start thinking about occasions like this about two years out. It gives me time to plan how I'd like to quietly commemorate the event in a way that's deeply meaningful for me. I have to admit, it's kinda mind boggling that I'm approaching a new decade. I feel younger in mind, body and spirit than I have at any other time in my adult life, just brimming with vitality. But 60?!

In Japan, the 60th birthday is special. It's believed that the celebrant begins a new circle of life. It's traditionally commemorated by wearing red - kimonos for women, vests and hats for men. And it's believed to be a time of rebirth and the color red symbolizes protection. Red gifts are usually given to babies and expectant mothers, making this midlife rebirth all the more celebratory, a beautiful rite of passage.

This takes me back to a conversation I had on [The Athena Wellness Podcast with Sara Harris](#) earlier this year, who spoke about wilderness rites of passage to help people reconnect with the earth and themselves. Here's a quote from Sara from that episode:



"Rites of passage are organized, intentional ways that cultures have to help youth become adults and help adults go through significant life stages of having children, of marrying, divorcing, partnering or starting something new. Any significant life passage can have an intention set to it so the community witnesses it. You may go through some kind of an ordeal and separate from a way of life you had before to step over the threshold into something new. And then you're also witnessed, in most cultures, by a council of elders who verify and hear your story.

Sara continues, "All those steps make the things we go through in life much more conscious, much more supported, rather than feeling like you're just freaking out, going through all of this by yourself. And people are much more apt to come out of a rite of passage with a certain gift that they've learned or earned through the ordeal that they've been through that not only becomes their personal gift, but it becomes part of what they share with their community."

[00:04:25] And that's what's been rattling around my head, simmering in the background as I've enjoyed the warm summer weather. I felt something at its earliest stages of development, something just beginning to form. An adventure. A discovery. A story. A thoughtful way to approach what's actually the beginning of, dare I say it, *elderhood*. And how do I prepare for elderhood when I still want to be at the kids table?

The other thing that kept flashing in my mind this summer was Sara's description of her vision quest and what she learned. How you cross over a threshold at the



beginning of the journey, which places you in “different time,” a state where you're open, able to see and witness what's presenting itself to you.

[00:05:18] Then there's the quality of going through the ordeal itself, a mirror to truly see who you are and the depth of your inner resources, like a reaffirmation of your strength. Finally, there's the return, crossing back over the threshold, being welcomed home by the community, and telling the story, which helps to integrate what you've learned into your life.

So this idea of marking my 60th birthday as ceremony, one of reflection and celebration, began to take shape. What do I have to learn? What will I embody in this new decade? And perhaps, most importantly, what am I leaving behind?

After months of holding this possibility, it became unmistakable. On Sunday, August 21, 2022, I woke up with clear guidance. I would be returning to Alaska in 2024. Why Alaska? I drove to Alaska in 2004 when I turned 40. I had three and a half weeks to drive 10,000 miles. And the experience was pivotal. I left an 18 year Wall Street career within months of my return.

And I had always wanted to go back to Alaska. It was on my mind when I bought my conversion van in 2020. And then the pandemic hit. But these last few years have given me time to establish my business in a way where I can work from the road with the right preparation. And so the plan is to elongate the three and a half weeks I took almost 20 years ago to three and a half months.



[00:07:13] On the day when this road trip vision quest inspiration hit, I created a new notebook that I've been using to plan and dream, emphasis on dream. The extra time will give me flexibility to find cool podcast, guests, continue teaching and coaching, and have plenty of time for the unfolding. I'm already thinking about the playlists I'll listen to and the writing that I'll do. Road trips create the perfect ordeal and naturally invite the process of letting go of the old and preparing for the new. Sounds like the perfect birthday gift, doesn't it?

I'm sharing this little insight with you for two reasons. The first is you may be coming up on a big milestone yourself and looking for a deeper way to commemorate it. If so, I hope you'll find some inspiration here today.

The second relates to something Sara shared during her podcast, that making the decision to commit to the vision quest, when you say, "Yes," it begins. And so my friends, I feel it has begun.

Sara also said a story is a gift. Thank you for listening to this story. I look forward to sharing its unfolding.

[00:08:37] 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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[00:09:39] [END OF AUDIO]