



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 171 – Vancast: Self-Created 30-Day Challenges
December 28, 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: 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.

Today's show is a Walking The Talk Vancast, a look behind the scenes into what I'm learning and working through along with a takeaway for you. These portable episodes are informal and casual, recorded on the go from wherever I happen to be at the time. And today, during the week between Christmas and New Year's, I'm nestled by the fireplace with my van recording equipment set up doing a fireside chat for the last episode of 2022.

We're a few days away from the blank slate of a new year. And for many that means making New Year's resolutions.



[00:01:29] Resolutions get a bad rap. We've all seen the dire statistics of those who don't keep resolutions past the end of January. But many do keep them and can experience life-changing outcomes as a result.

For the last four years, I've shared my resolution experiments in my January 1st blog posts. I used to take my resolutions very seriously, creating voluminous lists and intricate plans to make them happen. And it worked for me for a long time. But that approach doesn't feel like a good fit this year. Like everything else in my life these days, I'm gravitating from a Type A approach to more of a Type Be one.

As I define it, Type Be (and that spelled B E) is about presence, about being in the moment, and connecting with a feeling of aliveness. It's coming from your heart and not your head. It's about positivity and inspiration. And so the question I've been holding is: How can I enliven some of the things that I want to accomplish next year?

Back in October in a vancast episode entitled *Small Steps, Big Strides*, I shared my process of achieving a 2022 fitness goal of performing unassisted pull-ups. I outlined how I broke it down into small activities that I could do in less than five minutes a day. It was an approach that I adapted from my writing group.

A few days before the start of a new month, we meet for an hour to plan our writing goals for the next four weeks. A monthly calendar with the group's logo is sent to all members so we can print it out and track our progress. It's so simple. And it works.



In July, I printed out two calendars, one for writing and one for the fitness goal I was working on. I continued that practice throughout the summer, increasing the difficulty each month until I reached my pull-up goal. Then I changed the fitness challenge in November, and then again in December, still marking off my progress each day.

Here's what I learned: I like the flexibility of amending and adapting what I'm working on. It keeps me engaged while still working toward my bigger goals, whether writing or fitness. It keeps things fresh and aligned to where I am in the moment. And I learned it wouldn't have been possible to plan these monthly micro goals back in January. And that gave me an idea for 2023.

During this quiet week between Christmas and New Year's, I'm going to take some time to review and finalize the brainstorming I've done on what I'd like to do and experience this upcoming year in business and wellness. Then each month when I create my writing plan with my writing group, I'll add another 15 minutes onto that meeting, so I can determine what I'd like to try for the next 30 days in the areas of business and wellness - like a series of 30-day challenges.

[00:04:57] Thirty day challenges are all over social media. But what I love about creating your own is that they can be designed to build on one another throughout the year in a way that's meaningful to you. And when you're having fun, you don't even realize that you're creating behaviors that can shape your life into one that brings excitement and new horizons.



The benefits of an approach like this are numerous and they include things like consistency, which also is an *Athena Principle* that I define as the art of staying committed and engaged, especially during challenging times. Another benefit is building healthy behaviors and habits, and that's the outcome of consistent action, because repetition leads to reliable results.

Another benefit is motivation through progress. This creates an environment of continuous improvement where feedback and learning can be applied, allowing adjustments to be made in real time while still moving forward. Another benefit is a good ROI or return on investment. As I mentioned, only a minimal time commitment is required each day.

Next is taking action by trying something new. This trial and error approach builds trust with our inner knowing and develops new habits that we begin to rely upon, which builds more trust.

And lastly, we continuously build momentum. Our level of personal empowerment increases as we realize the responsibility for a beneficial outcome lies within us, leaving little room for blame or excuse. We notice it becomes easier to craft a lifestyle that supports good habits over the long term. And we begin to embrace the process and the work that's moving us toward our desires.

[00:07:04] It's been my experience that my intentions come to fruition when I consistently focus my energy and attention. The more I show up for myself, the more I want to show up for myself, and I begin to enjoy the preparation, the effort, the learning, and even the adjustments that I make.



Here's an example of how I'll be working with this process in 2023. My overall wellness goal for the upcoming year is to continue to build muscle. The muscle I built last year was a byproduct of the weightlifting goals I set and achieved at CrossFit. But I don't want to substantially increase the weight I lift again this year. I'll be 59 in May and my goal is to keep healthy and active, not to lift the heaviest weight possible every workout.

I'm also mindful that maintaining and even building muscle and strength at my age is important for longevity and self-sufficiency. And it involves all aspects of wellness: nutrition, movement, sleep, and recovery, all lending themselves to an array of monthly challenge choices throughout the year.

So here's how I'm starting the year. I'll be keeping my three CrossFit and two cardio workouts a week. But my challenge focus will be on increasing core and upper body strength. I haven't decided what January's challenge will be just yet, but it will be a similar format that I've been using - five sets of a specific body weight exercise each day that takes me no more than five minutes to complete.

[00:08:58] Here's my invitation for you. Design your own series of 30-day challenges throughout the year. And you can do it by trying these steps:

1. Select an activity or overarching goal for the year that you find compelling and a bit of a stretch but achievable.
2. Determine one action that you can do for the next 30 days that will move you closer to your overall intention that will take no longer than five minutes a day.



3. Find a way to track your progress that works for you through an app or a calendar.
4. At the end of 30 days reassess. You can stay with the same action for the next 30 days or you can increase the difficulty or you can integrate the learnings from the past month and select another action that will continue to move you forward.

And lastly, there are several ways that you can support yourself and increase accountability and they include: working with a friend or partner, publicly stating your intentions, and celebrating at the end of each 30-day challenge.

I hope you have fun creating your own challenge, whether it's related to wellness or business or any other area of life that you'd like to focus on. Breaking it down into twelve 30-day sprints will give you a feeling of accomplishment that keeps you on track to achieve whatever you set out to do this year.

A series of month-long actions will help you build good habits and keep you feeling positive and inspired and motivated. What a great way to start the new year.

And please know I'm wishing you and your loved ones a year of happiness, prosperity, and wellness.

Happy New Year!



[00:11:01] 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.

Until next time, be well!

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[00:12:02] [END OF AUDIO]