



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 175 – Vancast: What is Creative Living?
January 18, 2023

[music]

[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.

[00:00:29] Kathy: Before we begin the show, I wanted to share an opportunity for you or someone you know. At the time of this recording, I'm accepting a small number of beta students into my online course.

The program is called *From Type A to Type Be, How to Mindfully Descend the Corporate Ladder and Invite What's Next*. This course is perfect for someone who's contemplating or navigating a professional transition.

And I'm now accepting a small number of students who will get the course and group coaching sessions, facilitated by me, for free in exchange for course feedback and testimonials. It starts January 25th and runs through March 15th. Those interested can send an email to hello@AthenaWellness.com and I'd be happy to share more. I'm looking forward to connecting.



[00:01:27] Kathy: Hello friends 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.

I recently received a summary from the platform that hosts The Athena Wellness Podcast and I was thrilled to find that in 2022, this podcast was downloaded in 32 countries. It warms my heart and I feel you out there. And I just want to say thanks again for your amazing support. I really appreciate it.

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 I'm camped out in my winter spot by the fireplace with my van recording equipment set up during a fireside chat.

[00:02:31] Here's what I have on my mind: a dance choreographer, sourdough starter, and sparks of inspiration that feed a creative life. How's that for an introduction to a vancast?

Let me explain. We had some nice warm temperatures in early January in the northeastern part of the United States. One afternoon was so nice, I took a long walk on one of my favorite trails. I usually walk without listening to anything. But on this day at the beginning of the new year, I wanted to be engaged with a new idea.

So I searched my Audible library and found an audiobook that I bought a few years back and never listened to. It was by musician Jeff Tweedy called *How to*



Write One Song. I was drawn to this not only because I've been listening to his music for more than 25 years, but because during that time, he's allowed us to witness his growth as an artist, from early beginnings to flashes of brilliance to commercial challenges.

As I walked and listened, I got much more than I anticipated. While my senses were soaking in sunlight and the warm breeze, my body was moving in sync with his narration and I was completely absorbed in his story.

The book is part memoir and part how-to, as he gives us insight into the mystery of songwriting, of taking personal insights scribbled in a notebook and musical ideas, and then alchemizing them into a transcendental shared experience. But aside from the songwriting process, he talks a lot about how he structured his life to support this thing he loved to do.

I listened to half the book and then returned home that day with so much energy. It's a wave of inspiration I'm still riding. And in the wake of this experience, I started two little side writing projects that continue to draw me in.

[00:04:45] It's also led to deep conversations with my writing friends on what it means to live a creative life. It's hard to define. It's about honing your life based on your beliefs and values, regardless of outside opinion. It's about living wholeheartedly, doing what lights you up with the people you love. It's about the importance of qualities such as autonomy, curiosity, self-reliance, exploration and growth. And from a wellness perspective, living creatively increases well-being,



because those who choose to live this way find deep and meaningful connection with their lives.

The more I learn about living creatively, the more I've come to value my own quirks because now I see the connection. Things like creating structure and habits so I can satisfy my need to let my mind wander; being open to where ideas may come from, and creating an environment where they feel welcome; enjoying the sensual elements of everyday life; my need for privacy for my creative work, especially when I'm just getting started; and fiercely protecting my private time to work on my creative projects.

These character traits aren't oddities so much as they support and infuse my life with creativity. Living creatively is about making sense of the world. And I seem to need the slow-moving analog parts of life to balance the fast-paced virtual ones. There's also an element of risk - of living in a different way, of trying new things, being more visible, investing in myself, and then honoring that investment.

Bottom line, creative living isn't just for artists. It's about life engagement. It's daily choices and actions that uniquely shape a life. It's following what intrigues you, whether it makes logical sense or not. It's being open to unique problem-solving opportunities, and a willingness to be in full contact with your life.

[00:07:19] Which, oddly enough, leads me to bread. I missed the initial wave of breadmaking when the pandemic hit a few years back. I was finishing and promoting my book at that time. What drove me to start caring for sourdough starter like I would a baby is that the bakery that I've gotten sourdough bread from



no longer delivers to my area. So I decided to take the plunge. And a few months ago, I tried making my own.

Maintaining sourdough starter isn't as bad as I anticipated. I keep a little in the fridge and I feed it every few weeks. It was feeding time this weekend and while I was caring for it, I realized I liked the ritual and the sensuality of it. The yeasty aroma reminded me of sipping those first teenage beers decades ago. And as it activated on my kitchen counter, what seemed to be inert, began bubbling up in a matter of hours.

And I wondered, how does this mixture of just flour and water come to life? And it turns out, it's the wild yeast and the bacteria in the flour and the microflora in the environment that begins the fermentation process, feeding off of the sugar and the starch in the flour and producing carbon dioxide, which is what makes it bubble.

I realized that my creative projects are just like this. All of the filled notebooks and photos and audio files, clippings, book passage highlights, notes, articles, snippets from conversations, images of art, advice from mentors, all I've learned from being in nature, all of which gave me insight into basic components of my life - that's the flour and water of my creative process. On the surface, it looks ordinary, just notebooks sitting on a shelf. But when I sift through them and make connections that bring me to a new place, that's the wild yeast of the Universe, helping me ferment. Another word for 'wild yeast of the Universe' is inspiration, or simply mystery.



Like how Jeff Tweedy organizes his life so he can create song after song and then share those songs with an audience who have their own individual experience with that song, yet they're together as an audience sprinkled with the wild yeast of the Universe. That's what transports them to a collective euphoria in listening to the music together.

[00:10:19] Now to you. Maybe you're struggling with your creativity and feel blocked. Or you're in a good flow and want to go deeper. Or perhaps you don't even consider yourself to be creative in any way. I asked you to consider this: Your greatest creative act is how you live your life.

If you agree with that statement that your greatest creative act is how you live your life, you may be asking, "So where is the actionable part of this podcast?" That's where the dance choreographer comes in. Remember at the beginning of this podcast, I mentioned that I was thinking about sparks of inspiration, sourdough starter and a dance choreographer? Well, here's her cue.

Twyla Tharp wrote, in my view, one of the best books on creativity I've ever read. If you're unfamiliar with Twyla, she created her own dance company in the 1960s and worked with all facets of movement from ballet to modern dance to Broadway, where she created shows that incorporated dance and music from artists such as Billy Joel (Moving Out), Bob Dylan (The Times They Are a-Changin'), and Frank Sinatra (Come Fly Away). And she's still creating today.



In her first book, *The Creative Habit*, she cites Harvard psychologist Stephen Kosslyn in presenting four ways to act on an idea: generate it, retain it, inspect it, and transform it.

I love this framework. It's so simple, yet it is so powerful.

So my takeaway for you is this: In one area of your life that can be infused with a little inspiration, how might you generate some new ideas? And once you do, how can you find a way to retain them? When you have a collection, take them out and inspect them. And then let them sit and allow the wild yeast of the Universe to help you transform them into something that delights you.

Experiment. Dabble. Break the rules. Create new ones. Have fun in your creative lab. It's a wonderful place to balance your human experience with divine mystery. Just because.

Creative living is a reflection of who you are. And you may find, as I have, that you like moving through the world this way. You are the amalgamation of all the bits and pieces you've collected throughout the years. Enjoy this world. It's one that you've created. After all, your life is a work of art!

[00:13:30] 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!

[music]

[00:14:31] [END OF AUDIO]