



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 185 – How to Live a Vibrant Life with T.K. Mitchell**  
**March 5, 2023**

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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://AthenaWellnessAcademy.teachable.com) or click on the link in the show notes.

**[00:01:21] Kathy:** Hello and welcome, friends. Thanks so much for joining me.



If you're in need of a boost of positivity and optimism today, I've got you covered. Words you'll hear throughout this episode include joy, empowerment, exploration, inspiration, and life dreams.

I'm joined today by coach and speaker T. Kari Mitchell. T.K. started her own business at age 62 and has been inspiring women to unleash their personal power and live the life they've always wanted. Prior to starting her own business, T.K. had a 32-year teaching career. And she is a self-described one-woman serotonin machine.

Here's what we cover:

- Making the leap from education to entrepreneurship;
- Seven key areas of wellness;
- Common midlife transition struggles;
- The secret ingredient of happiness; and
- How to bring your positive vibes out into the world.

You can learn more about T.K. at [lifestyle120.com](http://lifestyle120.com). And I'll put a link to her website in the show notes where you can find links to her newsletter, YouTube channel, and socials.

And now onto the show. I hope you enjoy this inspiring conversation.

**[00:02:46] Kathy Robinson:** T.K., welcome to *The Athena Wellness Podcast*. Thank you so much for being here today.

**[00:02:52] T.K. Mitchell:** Well, thank you for inviting me, Kathy.



**[00:02:55] Kathy:** Please share a bit about who you are and what you do.

**[00:03:00] T.K.:** I am a motivational speaker and certified holistic wellness coach. I prepare mature and seasoned women for living a dynamic second half.

My online empowerment program provides tools for women to overcome self-imposed limitations and reclaim their power so they can live their best life. I also offer one-to-one coaching, group coaching, and webinars for your community organizations and professional groups. And additionally I have a weekly YouTube video, weekly blog and newsletter, and other goodies on [lifestyle120.com](http://lifestyle120.com).

**[00:03:43] Kathy:** You are a busy woman. [laughs]

**[00:03:47] T.K.:** You know what? I think I should say, in short, after all that, really what I'm about is promoting love and joy and good health.

**[00:03:56] Kathy:** Now that is a job description! I love that, I love it. [laughter]

So I'm going to take a leap here and say you probably weren't coaching mature and seasoned women when you were 20. So how did you come to do the work that you do today?

**[00:04:11] T.K.:** Oh, yes, it's been a journey. There were three major life-changing events that led me where I am today. Being the sole caregiver for my mother, overcoming my own health issues naturopathically, and wondering what the future held after my 32-year public school teaching career.



So with those three, I started searching for the answers to “What’s next?” Then I began thinking, “Now wait a minute. Is it possible for a middle-aged woman to become more prosperous in every area of her life at this time?” And then, “If so, what would be the secrets to her success?”

You see, I knew that I didn’t want to retire the same way my colleagues and relatives had retired in the past. I was certain there was more important work for me to do to continue my life of service but in a different way. So I went back to school to get health certified, blended my love for teaching and wellnesses, and started my holistic coaching and motivational speaking business at the age of 62.

Because I wanted to inspire mature and seasoned women, that’s what I call them, to step into their power and achieve what was most important to them, I used my experiences and success to create *Sprout Your New Life*, a comprehensive and sustainable empowerment program, specifically designed to prepare courageous women for a beautiful second half.

So my mission is to show women how to release the limited mindset of, “I’m too old to pursue my passions. My best years have passed. I’m not good enough or smart enough.” And then for them to make positive mental shifts to reclaim their health, their confidence, their purpose, and their power so they can be amazing in their golden years. And I know that if a woman wants to experience more joy and more prosperity in the second half of her life, she must tap into the secret tools that will lead to her success.



**[00:06:32] Kathy:** And we are going to get into some of those tools. But I want to go back to that decision point. Now, you mentioned you were caring for your mom, you had some health issues, but 32 years is a long time to do anything. Coming from a 33-year career myself, I know what that decision can be like.

So take me back to that decision point. Tell me a little bit about what was going on and why you felt that that was the right time for you to find something else.

**[00:07:00] T.K.:** I had to spend some time searching for what it was that was going to be important to me and it didn't come easy. I remember wanting to stay in the same position that I was because I thought all I knew was teaching in the public schools.

And so I explored teaching again but in different areas. So what I did is I signed up to be a literacy tutor at the community college. I did that for a while. It was kinda like the same thing - wasn't quite right for me. A friend of mine, a colleague of mine and I decided we were going to open up this reading clinic. And that fizzled.

A third thing that came to mind that I really pursued was my doctorate in education. I thought, "Well, what I could do is pursue another passion, and that is help to prepare student teachers for their bright future." And I was just all wrapped up into that, but that didn't work out either.

And so I realized that I'm not supposed to do the same things I've been doing. I am supposed to use my strengths and my talents to do a new thing. And that



exploration really opened me up to take some risks. So that's kinda how all of this got started.

**[00:08:38] Kathy:** So I love the exploration part of this because when I came to meet you, everything is established and you've got a career and it looks like it was all planned to be just that.

Maybe I can rephrase my question to say, you were in academia, right?

**[00:09:01] T.K.:** Yes.

**[00:09:02] Kathy:** How did you make the leap to know that there was more? What was it that made you think there is something else? And did you think you had the answer when you were leaving only to find out that there were going to be a couple of pivot points?

**[00:09:21] T.K.:** Yes. It's interesting that you asked that question because I remember two years before, and I don't like to use the word *retirement*, but two years before *graduating*-

**[00:09:34] Kathy:** [laughs] I love it.

**[00:09:35] T.K.:** -from a school teaching career, I felt like I was supposed to start a business. I felt that in my soul. What kind of business? Where is this coming from? I have no business experience. It took all those years to marinate. And so I'd said, "We have to be patient."



Back to that story I told you about wanting to go back and explore my PhD. This is such a very peculiar, very unusual story. I had set up the appointment with the professor, a PhD who was the chairman of that particular department for those interested in earning the doctorate to be for the service of the student-teachers.

She was so excited to hear about what I wanted to do. She says, "Oh my God, this is great. You're the perfect person for this. All these years of experience, you bring a wealth of knowledge to the university. It'd be great." We set up an appointment.

When I got to my appointment, she was a no-show. And I thought, "This is odd. How long am I supposed to wait?" I waited 20 minutes, then I called, no answer. Finally, after a half hour, she did answer. She goes, "Oh," so casually, "I'm in a meeting."

I go, "We have an appointment to talk about the application process."

"Oh yes. Well, I can't talk now. Maybe you could call me some other time."

And I thought, "Ooh my goodness, that was an unlikely answer for a person who's set up an appointment." It's like, "Wait a minute."

I said, "Well, thank you. I'll think about it." And I got in my car and as I was driving home, I thought, "Oh, if I'm intuitive at all, this is a sign." [laughter]

So that's what I mean by paying attention to the signs. Even though I didn't have a clear concept of exactly what I wanted to do, I know that I am a teacher and I know I enjoy that and I enjoy inspiring people. But it was about looking a little



deeper into finding out what it was that I had to share. What was it about my personal journey- which sometimes we overlook, because those things that are obvious to us, we overlook them because they're so easy. You've been through that. Why would anybody care? [laughs]

But that's what I had to do. And that's what came up with this blending the love of teaching and the love of health to health literacy and then, of course, speaking around that and workshops around that, and helping people become all they're meant to be.

I think we just have to pay attention and be open to the signs that are placed on our path. [laughs]

**[00:12:38] Kathy:** So I'm curious, that was a pretty big sign.

**[00:12:41] T.K.:** That was big.

**[00:12:43] Kathy:** Usually when you get a big sign, you are ignoring some smaller signs. I'm just saying in general in life.

But I'm curious, in this case, do you think that you were getting smaller whispers that you were ignoring or thinking like, "No, of course, I'm going to do something with teaching."

**[00:13:03] T.K.:** This is such a wonderful question to explore because I had been health conscious for a very long time. It started with going through those health challenges and helping my mom with hers before she passed away.





There was a lot that was going on in me becoming closer to spirit during that process, but I didn't think about it as a possible career or as something that I would move into, because it was so obvious. And even though my colleagues, friends that I knew, even before I *graduated*, even after, too, they'd say, "Oh, I want to know about what you're doing. Will you help me?" It was just like, "Of course, I will," but I didn't think about it.

Whatever is coming naturally for you, are those things that you feel inspired by that you haven't thought of? That's why I recommend that journaling, because we have to sit down and have time with ourselves. We just can't overlook this. We have to spend that sacred time with ourselves and turn within and just write everything down that we like, also some challenges that we are wanting to explore that we might be afraid to explore because we haven't been that route.

But I say, "Fear is interesting because it's there to teach us something about ourselves, there's something new that we haven't done." It's natural to have these reservations about it, but we just have to be bold. I say, "We have to have moxie, girl! Get out there and do this!" [laughter]

**[00:14:46] Kathy:** I want to talk a little bit about your program, Sprout Your New Life. You talk about the importance of looking at seven different areas of life, and I think it would be helpful to talk a little bit about that and why you selected those areas.

**[00:15:00] T.K.:** You know what I like to do, is to just review the paradigm very quickly, and then it might make sense when I talk about the program.



Like I said earlier, I've transitioned myself many times over the last 15, 20 years. And what I have learned is that in order to increase our chances of living a long, fulfilling life, seven key lifestyle elements must be practiced in order to grow and glow.

The first, of course, is we need to nourish our bodies with fresh, wholesome vitamin rich meals, making a conscious decision to avoid highly processed foods laden with salt and fat and sugar and preservatives. I just had to get that out there as a health coach.

[laughter]

**[00:15:50] Kathy:** Well, thank you. This is a wellness podcast, so thank you.

**[00:15:52] T.K.:** I just could not avoid that. [laughter] And the second is, establishing a regular fitness routine. Our bodies were meant to move and devising a plan to move more will help to keep it working properly. That's another plug, talking to a wellness coach here.

The third is getting proper sleep. We need to be well rested to accomplish our daily tasks. I'm going through these really quickly.

The fourth is, the importance of a comfortable and inspiring living space that's free of clutter and toxicity. We want to make sure our surroundings are conducive to the inner peace and creativity we crave.



Fifth is, nurturing healthy and meaningful relationships, keeping in touch with not only those we care about, but building *new* friendships. And that's critical because that will open up many more doors as well.

The sixth is generously giving of ourselves through community service, as you're doing, Kathy. [laughs]

The seventh, of course, the seventh lifestyle element is pursuing our interest and our dreams. That's what keeps us relevant and passionate about life.

Now, I believe that committing to these lifestyle components will promote health and wholeness and enable us to lead a full life, because these elements are interconnected.

For instance, a woman who wants to improve her overall health, she'll need to do more than eat nutritious foods. That's why I mentioned the seven. The seven components need to be aligned in order to reap the benefits of optimal health.

Now, having said all that, there is a secret sauce. None of the lifestyle elements I have found work without that sustainable, spiritual component. So I believe that in order to experience whole health and to fulfill the desires of the heart, a lifeline must be circulating through our everyday experiences. Now, this lifeline is an internal system of fundamental universal truths and is the essence of my messaging, it's the secret ingredient that binds everything together.

The audience is probably wondering, "Okay, now, what is this exactly?" Well, here it is... In a nutshell, it's love and compassion. It's your thoughts and words. It's



accepting responsibility and honoring your commitment to the choices you make in life. It's trusting and believing. It's having courage and passion, getting "Woo-hoo!," excited again and again and again about the rest of your life. It's about expectations and planning and being open to becoming vibrant during this next stage of your life.

I show women how to access this internal support system, apply it to daily living, and then fertilize their consciousness with the substance that will allow them to grow and flow.

**[00:19:02] Kathy:** I love the secret sauce element. And I'm curious if that's something that you came to later in life or if that was always a driving force in your life?

**[00:19:14] T.K.:** You know what, it was always a driving force in my life. But it didn't come forward until I had those downpours right around the time I was getting ready to transition from my high school teaching experience and taking care of my mom and my own health challenges and thinking about what my future was going to be.

All of that came forth with these spiritual life principles, I call them, of love and integrity, faith and enthusiasm. They were always with me. People always told me that, "Gosh, we were listening to you and you're so inspirational."

I didn't really understand what all that meant until I went through all of that stuff all at once. It was like, "Why not just a little bit at a time, please?" It was just, all of this



helped me to put this together. I grew so much and it all comes wrapped beautifully, if we allow that process to take place. So yeah...

**[00:20:25] Kathy:** I'm curious to know what the 20-year-old version of you would think of what you're doing in the world now? Could she have even envisioned that this is the way you would be spending your seasoned and mature years?

**[00:20:42] T.K.:** You know, you ask the right questions.

[laughter]

**[00:20:48] T.K.:** As I look back, what is so interesting is I had a few little things going on there. High school, my first couple years of college with some little issues and doctors wanting to put me on medication. And I took them and it messed up my whole gut flora.

I remember then at age 19, 20, 21, 22, having the mindset that I'm just going to research this- and this was back in the '70s, like, "What's going on then?" There was a lot going on then with naturopathic health, it just wasn't called that specifically. So I thought, "I can do this myself. I wonder what this would be like if I just changed this."

So just tweaking some things in my diet at that point. I remember doing some things with that and reading books and looking at all of these resources that I had. And exploring and meeting up and touching shoulders with people who were doing different things with their health.



Yeah, there are so many things as I look back, you are right. This is a such a great question. Looking back, those seeds were planted then. Yeah...

And I think that's what I like to bring out with women that I'm working with, is to look back and see what it was that was encouraging. Maybe something that you really enjoyed, or maybe even something that you not necessarily enjoyed, but something you overcame that you're just passionate about now that you can bring forward. People are inspired by other people's struggles.

**[00:22:45] Kathy:** That actually was going to be my next question, which is, what are some of the struggles that your clients have? Again, we're talking about folks that are transitioning to something new. So what are some of the common struggles that you help your clients with?

**[00:23:02] T.K.:** I help boomer women transition from any significant challenge in their lives in order for them to live more vibrantly. But there are a couple of things. There are two that I'm thinking about.

The first struggle I see is changing their mindset about age. And that's a hard one to do. Many believe that they're too old or they don't have what it takes to accomplish their dreams. So I want them to know that they are still here for a reason and that reason is to shine their light. I encourage them to not view age as a negative determinant. This is the perfect time to reinvent yourself.

I would venture to say that many of our listeners have more choices now than they did say 20 years ago. If they have kids, the kids are grown and doing their own



thing. You may be retired or approaching retirement or looking to possibly align your life with your passions. You may be living alone wondering how to prepare for the next chapter.

And because of your experiences and life challenges, you know a lot of things and have gained a unique perspective about life that someone much younger may not have. So these experiences are now your assets, they're part of your skill set. So that's one thing, is overcoming that mental block about, I'm too old now.

The second struggle I see is not being clear about what they want to accomplish. I think when people establish goals to improve certain aspects of their lives, they often are approaching the goal in isolation. They are looking for immediate results without a conscientious plan, which could be seen as a temporary solution to a much bigger concern. For example, how are those 2023 self-improvement intentions going? By this time of year, many have given up.

I had one client who wanted to lose weight so she could fit into this gorgeous gown she had purchased for her daughter's wedding. She lost the weight, but she was also very disappointed after gaining it all back in a short period of time.

So why is it that after a few weeks, many people find themselves making excuses about honoring their commitment or resort to self-sabotaging behavior? See, that was a goal that really wasn't a life goal. Perhaps it's because there's no conscientious spiritual foundation to support their growth.



You know, our physical world reflects our consciousness. So one must change her inner programming by reframing her thoughts and words in order to experience desired results.

So that's just one example. Is the goal setting, what is it specifically that you really want? Was it really the weight that you were after or was it that you wanted to be healthier so you could live a vibrant life? That changes things then, because then you have a lifestyle goal that could be sustainable rather than the short-term goal just for one particular wedding, for example.

**[00:26:39] Kathy:** Yeah, and I think as you were going through this, my thought was, "I wonder whose goal it was." There is nothing wrong with wanting to be at a particular weight or have a particular fitness goal, if it's truly yours.

**[00:26:55] T.K.:** Yes, yeah for sure.

**[00:26:57] Kathy:** You have a beautiful motto, and I think this would be a wonderful way to wrap up our discussion here. I wanted to share it and then hear a bit about how you came to this and how you live it each day.

Your motto is: Live, learn, love, grow, and, my favorite part, be a blessing to others. How did that come about? Tell me about how that informs your daily life.

**[00:27:25] T.K.:** Yes. As I mentioned earlier, I am in the business of promoting love, joy, and good health.





Each morning before I crawl out of bed, I do my spiritual work. I read inspirational passages, express my gratitude for the gift of another day, and establish a mindset for the entire day.

And then when I venture outside my home, I set my intention on being a serotonin dispensary.

**[00:28:01] Kathy:** [laughs] Love it.

**[00:28:03] T.K.:** Yes! Greeting people I see, complimenting them, smiling, lifting them up, and it works! They eat it up and I'm enjoying it. We're both rewarded for that.

So I decided years ago that I would live my life as a prayer. Yes, that's my motto. And that's how I live my life and support women who would like to do the same. But even if they're not there yet and they have an inkling that this is something that they want to achieve, I can help them get there at their own level for them, whatever's good for them.

**[00:28:39] Kathy:** What I love about your motto is that it's a daily practice and you get to bring it out into the world. To me, that's truly a spiritual practice - that you are bringing the best of yourself mindfully.

**[00:28:55] T.K.:** Mindfully. It has to be practiced. It has to be practiced daily and it becomes a part of you when it is, yeah.



**[00:29:05] Kathy:** You are an inspiration to so many. How do you- or let me ask you this, what's inspiring you these days?

**[00:29:17] T.K.:** Oh, gosh. There are so many things that I feel inspired by. I think- a simple answer. I'm just thinking of music and the readings and the program I'm in and all of that. I'm just inspired by life, really. My life's work lights me up on a daily basis. I like to think of it, my life's work actually, I like to think of it as play rather than work.

But there are so many things going on in my life now, everything merged into one, just really into the oneness. The spirituality component is oneness. If everything we do is related to that ultimate purpose, then I think we can flow better. Yeah, I'm just excited about the unlimited possibilities, yeah.

**[00:30:22] Kathy:** I'm thinking of the listener who is hearing this and saying, "This sounds absolutely wonderful. I would love to take steps to be there." But their view or their awareness sees a lot of what's not optimal in the world. All of the things, that other side when you turn over the rock and there are all of those scary things that are there and we have to deal with that as well.

I think I would be remiss if I didn't ask how your practices help you bring that dose of love and compassion into the world and how you see that balance.

**[00:31:04] T.K.:** Yeah, it is a balance. Because we do see a lot of things in the world, in our community, to turn on the news and you see it's there. How do we matriculate through that and with that?



I think we have to embrace humanity as a whole, but in doing all of that we have to know who we are. And I think the secret, too, is being comfortable with ourselves, knowing who we are, and I want to stress this – loving ourselves. When we are comfortable with ourselves, giving up those limited mindsets and loving ourselves fully – if we can do that, we've done a lot. We have to do that first before we can even consider helping others.

So that's the first step is getting in touch, knowing who you are, loving yourself, embracing yourself, and not being afraid to do that. Now some people are afraid to do that. But I think that that in itself will open people up to expressing love to others.

You know, that creates a domino effect. There are a lot of people doing wonderful things in the world now, and if we search for it, we can find those stories. Those stories are phenomenal. That's how I think starting with the self-love and then expanding that through whatever mission you think is going to be your purpose.

**[00:32:46] Kathy:** So well said. I love that it's the honesty, it's the love and the compassion. If we can find that in ourselves, the empathy and the broader compassion- you see yourself reflected in others much more quickly.

**[00:33:03] T.K.:** Yes.

**[00:33:04] Kathy:** When you do that work. Just beautifully put.

Please tell us a bit, tell our listeners how they can get in touch with you and what they'll find when they get there.



**[00:33:15] T.K.:** Oh, yes. Thank you for that opportunity to share that. I want our listeners to know that they can overcome current challenges, reinvent themselves, and evolve into the most amazing and dynamic individuals they were meant to be and have fun doing it.

Sometimes though it's difficult to make major changes alone. A transformational journey requires guidance and support. So I say to them, if you're ready to plant the seeds for your future, check out Sprout Your New Life, our life-affirming program that can help nourish, transform, and position you to flourish in your second half.

And I say to our listeners as well that if my message resonated with you today I invite you to visit my website, [lifestyle120.com](http://lifestyle120.com), and sign up for our blog and weekly newsletter to get inspiration, wellness tips, recipes, and much more goodness. Please subscribe to my YouTube channel and follow me on social media. I'm on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Thank you for allowing me to put a plug in there for that, Kathy.

**[00:34:31] Kathy:** Well, I appreciate you bringing your serotonin machine to me. Thank you so much. I feel it. [laughter]

It was really a wonderful conversation. Thank you so much for being here, T.K.

**[00:34:41] T.K.:** Well, thank you for inviting me. I had a wonderful time with you.



**[00:34:47] 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]

**[00:35:50] [END OF AUDIO]**