



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 221 – Reimagining Midlife Wellness, Part VIII – The Strategy
September 13, 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: Hello and welcome friends. 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 I'm recording this at home on a stormy summer September afternoon.

We'll continue with the eighth installment of our multi-part series on Reimagining Midlife Wellness. This series is focusing on the importance of staying well as we get older, especially in times of transition.



These talks provide a framework to help you define what matters most to you at this stage of your life and ways to continue to take positive action to be well. As a reminder, you can download the framework I'll be referring to for free at [athenawellness.com/action plan](https://www.athenawellness.com/action-plan). And I'll put a link to it in the show notes as well.

Today, we'll put it all together and I'll share how I worked through these episodes alongside you utilizing The Athena Principles to reimagine my own midlife wellness. But first a story to frame our conversation.

[00:01:56] Before it started raining, I took a five mile trail run this morning at a local county nature reserve that I've been going to for decades. At one point along the well traveled trail, you can see a waterfall. Years ago, it wasn't unusual for weekend hikers to come upon the side of the falls and want to hike down for a closer look.

But the off-trail terrain was tricky. And several times a year, the search and rescue team would have to trek up the mountain with a portable stretcher to get an injured hiker to the hospital.

A few years back, the park rangers posted a sign where this was happening to warn of the danger of off-trail hiking to the waterfall. It helped but it didn't stop all of the accidents.

Last year, they performed trail maintenance on a scenic secondary trail that crossed the river at a lower point and also led to the waterfall. Most importantly,



they posted a sign at the bottom of the mountain showing the safe route to the waterfall to help those who were unfamiliar with the trails. Problem solved.

Wellness is a lot like this. We can see the waterfall in the distance, in this case, our optimal well-being. But we may be tempted to get there in an unsafe way or take shortcuts that lead us off-course. But when we do a little research, prepare and heed the warnings along the way, we get to our intended destination. And it's a much more enjoyable experience.

That's how I've been creating my wellness plans over the last 25 years. And I'll be the first to admit that in my younger years, I didn't heed the warnings. I flirted with danger and I tried all kinds of shortcuts. So I can tell you from experience that the tools and the Principles we've been discussing truly work and for the long-term. I'm living proof.

That said, even if you do have a wellness plan, it's helpful to review it from time to time, which is what I'm going to do with you today. I'm going to walk through how I'm looking at the concepts we've discussed over the last seven weeks and share my strategy for the upcoming months. And then next week, I'll get into my detailed plan.

[00:04:29] In the first episode of this series, we ended with seven questions to consider, which are:

1. How do you define wellness and well-being for yourself?
2. How has your wellness changed over time?



3. Which well-being elements do you routinely support?
4. Where can you focus more effort?
5. Where do you currently fall on the Wellness Spectrum?
6. What might move you toward optimal well-being?
7. What does well-being look like for you in your next chapter?

You'll hear the answers to the first six questions baked into the rest of this episode as I discuss the changes I'm making to my wellness strategy. But I thought it would be helpful to hear how I'm answering the last question, which is, what does well-being look like for you in your next chapter?

It helps to take a look at previous chapters to answer this question. In my 20s and half of my 30s, I had youth on my side and did little to improve my health. Those were my Wall Street days and I worked hard, played harder and ate a lot of unhealthy vegetarian food. I did not have a formal exercise routine and sleep was in short supply.

That strategy needed to change when I got into my mid 30s and started feeling the effects of my lifestyle. I gained about 25 pounds, I was always tired and noticed differences in my agility and balance. So I began running, well actually fast walking to start, on a treadmill. I borrowed a weight bench and started a simple lifting program. I also became hyper-focused on my diet, following a basic weightlifting protocol and tracking my macros. It worked and I really did change my body and my life.



In my 40s, I began to work out in gyms and run longer distances, I meditated, ate well and added creative writing into the mix. My 50s brought a series of endurance events from a 275-mile cycling event to running a marathon and then an ultramarathon, along with challenges like bootcamp 10Ks, CrossFit, and Spartan events. In those days, these activities helped me manage the stress of a demanding corporate career.

So holding the question, What does well-being look like in this new phase of my life, was an interesting exercise. And I had a striking insight. For years, I had been *training* for something, and I prided myself on being dialed in and over-prepared. I meticulously planned and executed well-researched training plans, workouts, nutrition approaches, and meals.

But here's the epiphany. I'm no longer training for anything. What's motivating me is wanting to maintain my cardio endurance and my muscle strength while staying agile, flexible and balanced, the components of functional fitness, which will keep me active and independent for decades to come. So part of my updated strategy is to be less exacting in my approach and find ways to enjoy what I do from a mind, body and spirit perspective.

Which leads us to the second installment of this series where we talked about tools, practices and Principles that we can use to enhance our wellness and well-being. So I went back and reviewed the Holistic Wellness Spectrum and did the related assessment.



What stood out for me in this new phase is my new focus on simplifying my life and letting go of anything that no longer serves me, themes that I'll be incorporating into my new wellness plan. Also, I'll continue to use the practices I shared of contemplation, journaling, positive action, and holding a question, although I'll be taking a fresh look at all of them. And I'm excited to use them in new ways.

[00:09:00] Now to the Principles. The first Athena Principle is **Self-compassion**, defined as the care for one's own well-being in the form of self-acceptance and nurturing support. It's the ability to accept our imperfections and be kind and understanding toward ourselves, especially during times of transition.

Many of us, myself included, are experiencing transition on multiple levels. For me, aside from the upcoming milestone birthday, I'm also experiencing transition in my personal and professional lives. So I'll be incorporating self-compassion into my morning practices. More to follow.

The second Athena Principle is **Intention**, defined as a way to help us aim, set direction and connect emotionally to what we want. It's the heart-based why behind the urge to transform. In this new phase of life, my emotional connection to my wellness and well-being is about more freedom in how I spend my time and with whom, as well as maximizing my level of enjoyment as I redefine my wellness approach.

The third Athena Principle is **Consistency**, defined as the art of staying committed and engaged, especially during challenging times. For me, this Principle comes



most naturally. Once I create a plan, like the one I'll share with you in the next episode, I'll add it to my calendar and show up as scheduled.

The fourth Athena Principle is **Growth Mindset**, which focuses on how you view your wellness journey, because it not only determines your level of progress, but your level of enjoyment as well. I have a number of what I call "Raise the Spirit" practices designed to keep my mind positively focused and help keep my thoughts aligned with my actions. They've worked wonders for me, but they're in need of updating. This will be included in my action plan.

The last of the five Athena Principles is **Accountability**, defined as a systematic way to check-in with what you commit to accomplish, celebrate the wins and compassionately adjust where needed. This one is getting an interesting makeover because I need to ease off a bit on the accountability and determine how I'll be measuring my progress in a more compassionate manner. I also need to find new ways to celebrate the wins, which has never been a strong point for me.

[00:11:37] So these are the big themes that have come up for me as I've been preparing this series for you. As I mentioned, I'll be working this into a more detailed plan and I'll share it in an upcoming episode to complete the series.

I hope this has inspired you to reimagine your midlife wellness. And remember, you can download the free Athena Principles overview that I used in this episode at athenawellness.com/action-plan to help you chart your unique path. And I'll see you next time.



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[00:12:13] 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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[00:13:16] [END OF AUDIO]