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PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Annestasis Podcast Episode 12 - A Relocation Closer to Nature Transforms Purpose

Podcast Description: Henry Nelson and his significant other, took a leap into a new city, state, community, and lifestyle. As two individuals charted a course, post full-time careers, they defined what was meaningful and nature won. Combining two full lives and households in a long distance move proved stressful. Listen to Henry's epic storytelling genius as he shares the good, the bad and the victorious.

Podcast Transcript:

Stacey Sade: Good morning, friends. This is Stacey Saed, and we are getting ready to start another Annestasis podcast where we uncover beautiful stories about life transformation through relocation. Today I am joined and am honored to be with what is a dear friend, and that is the primary connection. But let me tell you a little bit about who we get the pleasure of listening to today. This is Henry Nelson, and I would call Henry a renaissance man because Henry has done so much in his lifetime, it's impossible to pigeonhole him. I first became a fan of his through his radio work. He was a beloved dj on FM 100, in the late night hours. And so Henry's voice graced us all as we were driving home to and from wherever we were going on the evenings. but currently, Henry is a radio host with Blue Ridge Public radio. He's a writer, he's an artist, he's a genealogist, he's an archivist. He is doing many things in a new season of life, and he just recently moved to Asheville, North Carolina. So we're going to speak to Henry in just a few minutes about what his move from the Memphis mid south area looked like and what it has produced in his new life. there is no moss growing on this stone, so Henry's got a lot to tell us. We're going to take a quick break, and then we're going to say hello to mister Henry Nelson from Asheville, North Carolina. Okay, guys, welcome back. You've heard a lot from me, and we're going to listen to the man now. Henry, how are you this morning?

Henry Nelson: I remain grateful and I'm well, Stacey, on my 70th birthday.

Stacey Sade: By the way, happy birthday. Today is the actual day.

Henry Nelson: No, actually, it was a week from today. It was a week ago today.

Stacey Sade: It's a month long.

Henry Nelson: Yeah, absolutely. this one will last the rest of my life. Oh, good.

Stacey Sade: I love that. I love that. Well, happy belated birthday and what a great, great season of life that you are experiencing. How is everything going in your world?

Henry Nelson: All things considered, what's going on in the world? Like I said, I remain extremely grateful. I have lost a little hope about just our world. but I am grateful and I'm still trying to be a soldier and move onward.

Stacey Sade: Absolutely. Well, today we could talk for hours and hours, but today, I would like to narrow our scope, just if I can. You made a bold and amazing move after an intentional move, very mindful decision to move. You and your significant other chose asheville after looking at many other places. Can you talk to me about what preceded that decision and what that looked like as you were making choices about a move, period?

Henry Nelson: Okay, well, hold on to that second question because I'll forget it. But if I. Let me know. and it's a simple question, and it's a simple answer, actually, because, one must ask oneself the question, what is it that, what do I really want out of my life? Not outside of work, you know, in where I'm living and living in Memphis. I'm from Memphis, by the way. I'm not from Asheville, and I'll always be from Memphis. But I wanted more. I wanted more outdoors. Yeah. And I know that sounds, forget money, forget all whatever else that cities offers, but I needed more outdoors. And living in Memphis. I was beginning to feel landlocked, and I had never felt that before. But my mantra was, God, I don't want to die going up and down poplar and union and driving to Arkansas, trying to get. Trying to get to, you know, to some water and get to some parks. And it was just work. And I've done all

the amenities in Memphis for years. And so, in two. So these are the questions. What do you want? The heat had beat me down. I wanted cooler temperatures. I didn't want coal, I just wanted cooler temperatures. Also, I was at a point in my life where, ah, I was working a job that was my. I call it my bottom. It was one of the most inspired things that I've done in my life. But it was also the one that I think I was supposed to say, okay, I'm tired now. I think I wanna go home. And I was exhausted. Mentally, physically, emotionally. And I've never. Money has never been the primary issue with what I do. And I just wanted to. I have things I want to do. I wanted to become a better writer. I wanted to be around more art. I wanted to be outdoors. And so we look West and West was at the time, this is 20, this summer of 20. Now think about what was going on in summer of 20. Yeah. And I decided. We decided that, you know, west was too far and too expensive to get so little, but mainly too far. And then we started looking east. And the only place we looked was Asheville. Now, I had never been to Asheville. I heard things about Asheville. Really?

Stacey Sade: No Biltmore trips? No. Never.

Henry Nelson: No. But I won. I was curious, but what I'd heard about Asheville is that Asheville, there's a lot of white people there. That's why I ever heard of Asheville. Thanks. And I didn't know that, but I did hear about. There's the arts. It's a very eclectic place. I was attracted to that.

Stacey Sade: Right.

Henry Nelson: And so that those were some of the decisions and other things happened within that process. So I don't want to take up all time, but that's the second part of that question was, tell me again.

Stacey Sade: Well, it was just basically, what was it that made you make a decision, period, other than that you wanted more, were you to say is a joke, especially looking at what you're doing in your life. But was there a stopping point? like you discussed exhaustion from your job, and there was a moment that you could make that decision?

Henry Nelson: Make the decision. And the decision was, you know, we're both at the same place in our lives. We want more of the same thing. You know, the outdoors. We want to read. I get books on my shelf. I want to read. We have, you know, we want to do more art. and really just kind of, I'll be honest with you, and this sounds negative, but I, love Memphis and I love my friends and I love, you know. You know, that I kind of wanted to be. I was reading a lot of James Baldwin at the time, and I wanted to be where no one knew my name.

Stacey Sade: Absolutely.

Henry Nelson: Yeah. And I didn't. I've never known what that feels like just to be, you know, nobody knows me here, really. And, I mean, people do, but. And it gives. It offers something in my. In my spirit to. To discover more about me.

Henry Nelson: Instead of in Memphis. It's hard work. I. You know, they're living in Memphis. All I know to do is do, do, do. And I was tired, to tell you the truth. And I just wanted to kind of focus on. Well, I've. I've served. I want to focus on some of my life. So that was the only way I could do it, was to step away.

Stacey Sade: Well, yes. And let me, just tell our listeners, I mean, from my perspective, first of all, you were never going to not be known in Memphis. Henry is a celebrity by anyone's guesstimation in this city. And also, you had kind of wrapped up your career here in the nonprofit sector and done various things there. And as we all know, in nonprofit work. I mean, you know, you can hustle until you can't hustle anymore, you know, getting that good work done. And, So I get it, and I love what you shared about your intention was for more. And, I hear also, ah, a pace that you were looking for a little bit slower pace so that you could do the things that are more contemplative and less busy. As a person who owns a company, boy, I get that exhaustion from the hustle, of just wanting to take a breath. So I think that that is beautiful. For all the right reasons, You guys decided to make an intentional move to Asheville. So what was your first visit to Asheville? What did that look like to begin the process?

Henry Nelson: Well, I will tell you that I had. Words are powerful to me. In all that year, in 20, I was thinking about repositioning. People call it retire. I don't use that word. I will never retire. I've always told myself that. But, the repositioning is what it really is. And we decided to drive here. We were coming to see a house. The real estate market was doing some crazy things that nobody had ever seen, we'd never heard of. And we were looking at houses here. We both sold our house and we were looking at houses and things were crazy. It's like, wow, we found a house and all of a sudden it's gone like that. And we found this one house that we're going to look at, and it sold over the weekend while we were driving down, right? And there was another. So let's look at another house. And I was driving down and I was listening to WKNO, as a matter of fact, and something that really endeared me to Asheville. I've never been here and I'm on my way. And there was this story about the municipalities, and Asheville was one of the two municipalities that were having the conversation about reparations. Now, whatever that means, it's a big word. And I thought, wow, that's interesting. And that conversation is still going on. But it endeared me to something that I didn't even know yet. So I get here and I find out about the history of Asheville, which has been what we would call mostly regentrified, if you will, gentrified. But, they still they know that urban renewal wiped out Asheville and. But they're still trying to hold on to the culture, to the best of their ability, you know, of the African Americans that lived here. So I was endeared by that. And I get here and boy, the outdoors was like, I've never seen the blue ridge mountains. And I probably drove through here when I was a kid, but it wasn't this. And just, the atmosphere. There's only 100,000 people here and I didn't expect that. But I tell you, the thing that has surprised me was that we've found this one house that I would have never bought if it hadn't been for my partner. But it's in a neighborhood that's, very diverse and it also, has a lot of history. But it's a neighborhood like people, walking. And I was endeared to the neighborhood and now love the house we live in. A hundred year old house that, And so it's all that, it's like things, it's like Einstein says, you know, nothing happens to something move now all these things are happening and I'm going. I don't know if I want to do that, but, you know, I'm moving still. We're going to move. And so I'm living in that house now. And so many other things that have happened, in that regard. So I love that.

Stacey Sade: It totally answers the question. So you guys have taken a trip to Asheville and you've chosen a house that may have not been in your, in your basket of things to do. You've made some decisions. What was the process of. It's a complicated move. You've got an entire life and world in your home. I would assume that your significant other also an entire world, art life in her home. You guys, not only changing cities, but you're blending resources and keepsakes. No part of that is uncomplicated. Can you talk to me about what, logistically that looked like?

Henry Nelson: You know, I think, being naive and having, inspiration, motivation to know it wasn't about, you know, you got. The move is going to have got to happen either way. Right? You know, ready or not. Yeah. And, and what was it like? Well, like I said, the real estate market, first of all, you know, things were constantly moving. You know, things are constantly moving around. But in this bubble that was happening in September, when we're looking at houses, trying to sell our house, I'm trying to sell my house, she's trying to sell her house, she's packing her house, I'm packing mine. And the thing is, it's one of themos. It's beyond stressful. But, it was also kind of exciting, too. And stress can be fun and exciting.

Stacey Sade: Right, right. Definitely.

Henry Nelson: It was, It turned out for me to be rather traumatic. There was just so many. I didn't think too much about it. So many things. Picking up your life and setting it on another planet is what you're doing. And, ah, I packed my house. and we paid someone to pack her house, you know. And that was that. That was good. But, it was stressful. And then the one moving company moved us. and, that was stressful too, to me because they take our stuff as it's merged in a truck. And for whatever reason, I can't remember right now, our furniture is sitting somewhere in Memphis that I don't know. Until something happens where they can move it, I'm going, oh, my God. Okay. this is what I asked for. And I have no clue about how the process is. I just know what I'm supposed to do. But everything works out in the end. It's stressful. In fact, like I said, I call it traumatic for me because emotionally and physically, it just takes a toll. and when we get here, once I did it, the drive here was

cool. And I get here and you exhale. And, we closed on our house once we got here, actually.

Stacey Sade: Yeah.

Henry Nelson: And moved in the weekend that we got here. And that in itself was another thing. You know, it's like I tell you, the house is beautiful. It's an zero tutor house. It's hundred years old. The lady that lived here had a lot of cats. And when I came here, we came here to look at it. She went to walk her dog. And I'm hearing voices in the back of the house. And I'm walking through and there's a, you know, two voices and there's a parrot with two voices. I'm going, oh, my God.

Stacey Sade: Oh, my gosh.

Henry Nelson: Anyway, but the house has turned out. It's a beautiful home. And, it's very, very charming.

Stacey Sade: I love that. Henry, you touched on a word that I think is so important and really just a whole thought process. What you described was a very transactional situation. You pack, a moving company comes, it gets your things, you go. It's supposed. It is talked about in language that is very functional.

Henry Nelson: Right.

Stacey Sade: You used the real world words. traumatic. the logistics of it were upsetting. It was, the connection to your things. Not only your things, but the things that were precious enough that you decided to take was there. It was almost as if you had a child or a pet or an animal or something that was kind of unknown. Know where that is? Those things in the world in which I live in. And the longer that I do what I do, I am keenly aware of those human responses to this transaction. It is not functional. We have mentioned it before. It is not a plumber coming to your house and making a repair. Not only is it an uprooting a new life, a transformation, but also, it can carry all of the stressors. It's a top five. Death, divorce. That is the top five. And I don't think we talk about it anywhere near enough.

Henry Nelson: It is, and it's a fact. It is one of the most traumatic things of a person's life. absolutely. And of course, I've moved a lot in my life, and it was not easy, but it was just what you do, you move. But this was like a move that, you know, at a point in my life where it was, extraordinary and things that I. Of course, I'm treating it like you're just 25, 30, 40, moving, moving to a place. But the thing is, it's not. It's complex. It's extremely complex, because then there's a situation of having to. The things that you're leaving behind, I mean, that are still important to you, but it's like having to sort through it all. and I will tell you, as looking back on it, and even shortly after we got here and settled in a bit, it. I'm still extremely grateful that I did it because it was necessary. If I wanted to have what I wanted in my soul. More outdoors, cooler temperatures, just, a repositioned life to, be more contemplative, then this is what I was willing to do. And it turned out ok. Well, good.

Stacey Sade: And I want to hear all about that. That's a great segue that we talk about, because it's all about why did you move? What did the logistics look like? And then what does your life look like? Now? That's a great place to take a pause. friends, we're going to take a quick break, and then we're going to come back and talk with Henry Nelson, good friend and person who picked up his life to be more intentional about living a new life. And we are going to hear from Henry about the price paid for dealing with the move. What did it produce? What carnival are you attending since you bought the ticket to the move? In just a minute, we're going to hear from Henry about the good stuff. So thank you and just. We'll be back in a second.

Henry Nelson: This is a journey. Let me take you on a journey. There will still be when you leave this planet, leave it in a better shape, then you found it, right? And that's kind of how we live. Watch the journey on the Kazukian network.

Stacey Sade: Okay, podcast listeners, this is Stacey Saed with the Anestasis podcast. We are wrapping up our time with Henry Nelson, the Renaissance man of Asheville, North Carolina, making, good things happen. Henry, talk to me about in your hundred year old house. After going through everything you went through in the summer of 2020, what changed as a result of you moving? What is your life like now?

Henry Nelson: Wow, that's a loaded question, because it's a lot. thank you. You called me a Renaissance man. I know a couple of Renaissance men, and I call them Renaissance men because that's what they are to me. But I, cook. I haven't cooked since I was 20. The house had a kitchen. It's a hundred year old house. The kitchen's about that big. About that big. And I will say, because, I, feel privileged that I could have the money to have the kitchen redone. And I always loved kitchens, but I never cooked in them, you know? And so, you know, cooking, I'm becoming a better writer. I'm reading books that I've been on my shelves for years, you know, but also, I'm working in the yard. Just things that I've wanted to do. I'm riding my bike more. I live a mile from downtown Asheville. For two years, there was. I didn't know what the city was like because there was nothing on the streets. And now I'm seeing how the people that come here for the fall leaves. The blue ridge parkway is just a mile down the street here. I can go places here that I. This is what I, you know, what I really miss? If Memphis had a place, you know, there's New Orleans, you can go to St. Louis, you can go to, difference down south, you know, you can go. Where can you go?

Stacey Sade: West, east Austin, Texas.

Henry Nelson: Go to Texas. But here it's like, I can go, I'm going to Alexandria, Virginia. I'm going to Newport News. But the proximity of things, the great smoking, the smoky mountains, it's 50 minutes. And I go there a lot. But my point is, I have these places where I'm nothing, and nothing's on a grid. Oh, the grid. And I, and I, and I love that. And that's just how I'm wired also. It's like in Memphis, what I would do most times, I would never drive back the same place, the same direction.

Henry Nelson: That's how I'm wired. Yeah. You know, it's like I'm nothing. I'm not an out and back person when it comes to hiking or whatever. I like a loop or diverse kind of loose loop, but it's just way I'm wired. So a lot of good things have happened.

Stacey Sade: That's wonderful. And what I'm hearing you say is that, what you sought, you found, and it is expanding you in ways that if you had remained in Memphis, even in a new house, even with a combined household, you never would have gotten to the space to do, radio in an area that they don't necessarily know your name, where you're able to talk

about things that are meaningful to you. the quiet. I hear that you're, more of a writer. You certainly were always a fan of the arts, and now you're creating art.

Henry Nelson: I'm creating art. I always wanted to do that.

Stacey Sade: I support that 100%. I've seen the pictures and I, say you go, it sounds like your new life was worth the price of admission. Would I be, would that be a fair statement?

Henry Nelson: Absolutely. And more. You know, there, there's, there's as much unknown about the new life as there is one hope student can know. You know, I knew what I wanted to do and I could touch that. But then the other things that happen out of that, like I'm, I feel like I'm having an education that I could never have gotten. Working, working in public radio. I've never worked in public radio. It's a different thing. So those kind of things that, wow, I like this. I get to learn.

Stacey Sade: Absolutely. Well, you are embodying what I believe is fourth, quarter lifestyle. You know, we were always raised around people, that fourth quarter meant rest. It meant do what you've always done and you get stuck in that space and you're not doing that.

Henry Nelson: Wow. Yeah. And that, like I said, the ancestors lead me, you know, and I say that because they know me, and I am a product of people who have migrated. My grandmother was Geechee, you know, she told me, I'm a geechee, your granddad's a pygmy. And they settled, you know, they were brought over and they settled in the Georgia, the gulas settled in South Carolina. And I get to visit those places and fill that spirit, and I'm, digging to write about it. And so I, and I, they know that we're migrating my, well, we all are, travelers. But I think, just I could have never planned the bigger picture of what's happening. I only knew that I wanted more outdoors. I wanted Google tours. That's so trite when I think about it.

Stacey Sade: well, I love that, Henry. On so many levels in my lifetime, you have been that guiding light of what to do next. What does that look like? I dare say I would have ever been a professional artist, or maybe not have ever had the courage to start a podcast. You have the gift of being able to inspire others, and I'm going to take a page from your

book. And when I'm contemplating the next 10, 12, 15 years of my life, I'm going to remember this time of talking to you about what that looked like and what you are experiencing in that next season of life, which is not sitting in a comfortable chair, talking about how your bones ache. And, that just. That just, you know, seemed. Seemed like something I didn't want to be a part of.

Henry Nelson: Yeah.

Stacey Sade: So I really appreciate what you've shared with us today. I certainly appreciate the example that you are giving all of us about how to live an inspired, intentional, repositioned life. so thank you for your time and your talents and your gifts, and always your inspiration.

Henry Nelson: Well, thank you very much, Stacey, Anastacia, and, I am but a reflection of you. And because we shared that reflection in an inspired way and the arts live in us. Absolutely.

Stacey Sade: I absolutely love that. Well, ladies and gentlemen and friends who have tuned in with us for this episode of, the podcast for Anestasis, we thank you for your time. You have a lot of options out there to listen to as far as podcasts are concerned. And I hope that what we are bringing you, the content that we are bringing you, inspires you in some way to live a more mindful, intentional life and get through the moving process in order to get to a better space. It is not functional. It is spiritual, it is emotional. And, we are here to talk about the good, the bad, the ugly. So thank you, Henry. Thank you, listeners. And with that, come back and see us again for more episodes of the Anestasis podcast. Goodbye.