

Bounce Back Into Balance In 2010!



How to Rebound Quickly Under Pressure Using Stress to Your Advantage!

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Ready Or Not.. Welcome to 2010!

Welcome to 2010! Could you use some inspiration, practical tips and cutting edge information to help you rebound quickly from the pressures you'll face in your work and life this New Year? Then this E-Book has been created with you in mind!

Because much of my 20 year nursing career was in Emergency Medicine and ambulatory surgery, the bulk of my time was spent helping patients *react* in crisis situations to a specific condition or illness that they *already* had, and I know I was able to make a positive difference for them.

But within my Wellness coaching practice, I enjoy making an even bigger difference! I help people get happier, healthier, and stronger by taking proactive steps to avoid overwhelm and *prevent* illness. If you're like most people, you know *where* you are, and you see where you *want to be*, but often get stuck knowing how to get - and stay - there.

To move past surviving and to start thriving in our lives we must learn to rebound quickly from stress with grace and ease. To achieve this we need a **focused mind**, **abundant energy**, and **emotional hardiness**. These are the three components to Bounce-Back Resilience that make it *entirely possible* to truly experience work/life balance.

As we get started, check out the lyrics from this Nickelback song. Please take your time reading the words; they are so powerful!

If Today Was Your Last Day (Nickelback)

My best friend gave me the best advice
He said each day's a gift and not a given right
Leave no stone unturned
Leave your fears behind
And try to take the path less traveled by
That first step you take is the longest stride

If today was your last day
And tomorrow was too late
Could you say goodbye to yesterday?
Would you live each moment like your last?
Leave old pictures in the past?

Donate every dime you had?
If today was your last day

Against the grain should be a way of life
What's worth the price is always worth the fight
Every second counts 'cause
There's no second try
To live like you're never 'livin twice
Don't take the free ride in your own life

If today was your last day
Would you make it up by mending a broken heart
You know it's never too late
To shoot for the stars
Regardless of who you are
So do whatever it takes
'Cause you can't rewind
A moment in this life
Let nothing stand in your way
Cause the hands of time are never on your side

Now I have a question for you... And be honest with yourself, OK? **What if... Today was your *last* day?** Would the stressful little things like the inconvenience of your car breaking down, being late for work because the dog pooped on the stairs, anxiety about overdue credit card balances or exhaustion because the baby was up all night with colic be your focus?

Idon't think so!

Likely you would not waste a minute on stuff that doesn't really matter! You would spend time laughing, playing, and letting those close to you know how much they are loved.

If today were your **LAST** day, what would you **be sure** to say and do?

My Story ~ “From Fear to Faith” How Coaching Became My Passion

When people meet me today, they often say “You always seem so happy and confident, like your life is so easy; Is that for real?” Yes, it is real now, but it hasn’t always been that way. *And it all depends on your definition of “easy”!*

My story is one that I’m sure many of you can relate to in *some* way, because no matter who we are and where we come from, life seems to naturally provide many challenging highs and lows to learn from on our journeys.

I was born the last of five children to hard working busy parents who were both nurses. My father was a Nurse Anesthetist in the Air Force, but was discharged early after suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. His struggle for emotional stability made it difficult to stay in one place very long. He also had an unpredictable temper, leaving us all a bit unsettled as to what would happen next. Our family packed up and moved 19 times. That’s 19 different homes, schools, communities, churches, and sets of friends. .

Our home lacked both harmony and predictability, so I grew up feeling fearful, stressed, and insecure. I lived in the “fight or flight” mode, which over time, became my comfort zone.

I tried to be the kid who never needed anything or made any waves. A straight “A” student, I poured my energy into trying to be perfect.

At age 14 I left home to attend a Christian boarding school, but found it difficult to adjust. I wanted to feel accepted and like I belonged there, but just felt out of step and on the sidelines. I compared myself to other girls, wanting to be pretty, to fit in; but with an athletic build, it seemed I could never measure up and becoming skinny became my total focus. I thought if I could just get thin enough then I would be happier, and I would finally fit in.

Instead of finding the happiness, I found myself in the self-destructive grip of anorexia and bulimia. What I thought were my two “best friends” quickly became my worst enemies.

I completed high school in three years, and decided to become a Registered Nurse.. I excelled in nursing school graduating with honors, but still felt very empty. I felt that *I* was never enough, and felt powerless to change my circumstances.

These experiences were valuable because they provided me a long list of what I *didn’t* want, and what *didn’t* work to bring me happiness. I set out looking for a way to find what did make me happy and create new circumstances but I didn’t know how. I knew where I was, and saw what I wanted to be, but kept getting stuck not knowing HOW to get there...

This led me to a lot of trial and error, taking on a painfully co-dependent role in my first marriage with someone I wanted to “help” and “change” but that didn’t work out so well and was divorced at 25. Through the process of divorce everything fell apart for me. So many times I just felt like giving up. I’ll never forget the night I was flipping through the yellow pages, with tears streaming down my face as I prayed to be guided to someone who could help me move forward. It was a “down on my knees” moment when I realized I could not do this by myself, and the first time I opened myself up to admit it. I was about to receive the gift of Synergy.

My prayers were answered, as I was led to a wonderful and brilliant mentor who for three years helped me take one step at a time past my pain. Willpower and persistence had gotten me this far, and now it was time to take an honest look at what wasn’t working in my life, beginning with my negative self-talk and the beliefs I held about not being good enough. This was undermining my self confidence, preventing me from trusting myself or anyone else, much less that there really was a loving God. I also realized I had taken responsibility for many things that were not mine, and needed to learn how to set boundaries and not take everything so personally.

As a result, my physical health suffered. My immune system was battered, resulting in frequent colds, sinus infections and fatigue; symptoms of emotional and physical “burn out” from long term stress I didn’t have the tools to deal with in a healthy way.

I committed to Adult Children Of Alcoholics meetings, and became open to allowing others to support me as I began to create a healthy future. This is where I developed my absolute faith that there **is** a loving power greater than me, which has my best interests at heart, and is always there for guidance if I just ask.

I finally found out “HOW to get there” and this is why I am so passionate about sharing with you what has helped me to go from just surviving to truly happy and thriving. **If I can do it, anyone can.** It’s a bumpy road at times, but well worth the work you put into really enjoying life. Each of us has a different set of tough experiences, but there are common threads that run throughout the process of making lasting changes forward. What has worked for me is finding healthy mentors, seeking serenity, and building bounce-back resilience.

I am happy to say that I now love and accept who I truly am, have been able to throw perfection out the window, and choose to celebrate and reward my progress. I enjoy a wonderful marriage to my husband of 15 years, Garth, and together we have two beautiful children - Ben who is 13 years old, and Dani-Grace who is 4 years old. Both are growing up happy, healthy, and strong!

What about you and your life? Take a few minutes to think about your life right now, then answer these questions:

What challenges and stresses keep you from feeling your best every day? (These are things or situations that create negative emotion like frustration, anger, and feelings of being “stuck”.)

What things do you believe you are unable to change?

What things do you believe you are able to change?

With these areas identified, let's explore how a **focused mindset**, **abundant energy**, and **emotional hardness** can help you bounce back into balance for 2010.

A Resilient Mind

Work Smarter not Harder with a Focused Mindset

Do you ever wake up in the morning feeling anxious and wondering how you can possibly “get it all done,” and feel like you’re behind before you even get out of bed? Then, for just a fleeting moment, you consider the possibility of pulling up the covers and calling in “sick”? Except a sinking sensation takes over as you face the reality that with everything on your “to-do” list, it’s just not an option. The anxiety can escalate to overwhelm pretty quickly unless you know how to calm yourself down.

Recently a client asked me, “Christina is it even *possible* to not get frazzled when my schedule gets crazy and there just aren’t enough hours in the day?” I replied truthfully. “No, but it sure is possible to stress less!”

No matter what our job title, there will always be an endless and growing list of things that need your attention. Urgent events, activities, tasks and demands can drag us along until we lose sight of what matters most. As a result, there are more expectations. We have the choice to place stress on ourselves to “get it all done” while pleasing everyone at once, or we can reach for tools that help us stay focused to avoid overwhelm and eventual burn out.

One way to stay mentally focused is learning to **embrace and adapt to change**. This is probably the #1 thing my clients benefit from learning first when we begin working together because it helps them move away from feeling overwhelmed.

You’ve heard it said that “The only thing constant is change” right? **Even though we all have different ways of handling change, it’s a scientific fact that we are all 99.9% alike and only .1% different, so that means there are common hurdles we all will face when attempting to master any real and lasting changes...**

One thing we can **all** expect, though, is **resistance to change!**

How do you handle change and transition? Do you embrace it or resist it?

It's easy to forget that everything is constantly changing and why it's human nature to resist change with all our might. We are programmed to prefer the status quo! Like a thermostat we have a set-point that desires to keep us where it is comfortable and familiar.

The Goal is to be able to navigate through changes without activating the Fight or Flight Response. This helps us use stress to our advantage. The first step is to know the difference between overwhelm and burn out.

O v e r w h e l m v s . B u r n O u t

O v e r w h e l m is experienced when the focus is on “**too much**”... Too much on the to-do list, too many bases to possibly cover, too much expected of us from others, and a frantic use of time and energy to juggle all the demands we're facing. Some of you are already experiencing this. Only when we acknowledge this overwhelm, and take steps to move back into balance, can we avoid the flames of burn out.

B u r n o u t is experienced when the focus is on “**not enough**”... Not enough resources, not enough help, not enough money, not enough time... leading to feeling you simply don't have enough energy to even care anymore. This is a dangerous place to be, and is damaging to our health, sanity, the quality of our work and close relationships. We've all heard someone say “I feel fried to a crisp”. Some of you may find yourselves standing at the edge of burn out right now.

Think of our brain as a pharmacy. We DO have a choice about what concoction gets mixed up and sent out into our bloodstream! From the time you encounter a stressor, you have six to eight seconds to make an intentional decision *by design*. Otherwise our bodies will make a decision *by default*. Which will it be?!! We need to accept accountability for what we choose.

1. Adrenalin and Cortisol, which activates the Sympathetic Nervous system, resulting in a Fight or Flight reaction. This is like having your gas pedal stuck down, and all you can do is **react**, making it impossible not to crash head on into the obstacles coming very quickly towards you.

or

2. Oxytocin and Serotonin, which activates the Parasympathetic Nervous system, resulting in the ability to “Rest and Digest”. This is the brake, that is available to you at all times, that when applied with firm and even pressure, will slowly bring everything back down to normal, allowing you to stay cool and **respond** calmly under pressure.

The Synergy Coaching Model™

A Guide to Working Smarter Not Harder!

In the face of stressors we all have a choice. What will yours be? Will you retreat, respond, or react? Your answer depends a lot on which “zone” you are in. Many people retreat to the **Comfort Zone**, a place that feels safe and predictable. Not a lot of stress here, but also not much growth or forward movement either. It’s an OK place to visit, but we don’t want to set up camp forever!

Characteristics of the Comfort Zone (Retreat)

- Low energy
- Fixed mindset, closed to learning
- Status Quo
- Stuck in blaming, shaming, complaining
- Surviving, not really thriving
- Taking care of others at our own expense
- “Why fix something that isn’t broken”
- “I’ve always done it this way”
- Thoughts and behaviors that don’t serve anymore

Successful people who thrive under pressure make the choice to respond and take one step at a time, balancing their energy within the **Learning Zone**.

Here you embrace change and are always looking for new opportunities. You are focused, productive, and calm, bypassing the fight-or-flight response. It’s easy to problem solve and think clearly. There is room for making mistakes, and it’s easy to show compassion for yourself and others. You try new things, knowing we’ll either “love it or learn from it.”

In the learning zone you are your most creative and enthusiastic self. It’s the place where you get the best return on your investment of time and energy, and the perfect place to use stress to your advantage.

Characteristics of the Learning Zone (Respond)

- Thriving, not just surviving
- Acting, not reacting
- Highest return on your energy!
- Growth mindset, open to learning
- Best place to be focused and productive
- Takes personal responsibility
- Self compassionate, connected, energetic
- Looks inward for validation
- Energy is of expansion, looking for the gifts and lessons in life

As hard as we try, there are times we may feel scattered, unable to think clearly, find it hard to catch our breath, or like your heart is going to beat out of your chest. The fight-or-flight response has kicked in and we're in the **Panic Zone**. We're only reacting, not acting. There's a lot of frantic activity, but you're working harder but not smarter, which is a true waste of valuable resources.

Characteristics of the Panic Zone (React)

- No return on your energy
- Unable to think clearly, fear and confusion
- Fight or flight response
- Physical symptoms of panic attack... racing heart, shallow breathing
- Scattered, unfocused energy
- Shutdown emotions to cope
- Look to others for validation
- Reacting, not acting
- Self destructive or risky behaviors

Unless there's a true emergency where you need to run or fight, this is the time to step back and take a few slow, deep breaths, using a technique called **"Breathing to Thrive."**

- Think of something that makes you happy and relaxed: A place, a person, whatever brings you positive thoughts. Picture that in your mind as you inhale deeply, holding the breath for a second. Then exhale very slowly while making a "humming" sound. This technique activates the vagus nerve, which stops adrenalin and cortisol from being released in your body, and promotes the relaxing and calm-inducing hormone oxytocin to be released instead. Repeat this five times, or as long as it takes to help you break out of panic. **Try it, you'll love it!**

Think about your past week. Which Zone have you spent the most time in – the Comfort Zone, the Learning Zone, or the Panic Zone?

Which Zone do you want to spend the most time in? Do you need to move out of the Comfort Zone a little, or pull out of the Panic Zone?

Powerful Daily Affirmations Exercise

“What we think and do today, right now, will have an accumulated effect on all our tomorrows”
~Alexandra Stoddard

What are Affirmations? Affirmations are powerful statements to remind us what we know to be true, despite what others may say or when our own ego plants that seed of doubt. They are most powerful when we:

- Say them in the present tense
- Write them down
- Feel them strongly
- Say them everyday, first thing in the morning and last thing at night

Affirmations form our behavior patterns and habits. They are the foundation of our internal dialog.

Affirmations help us focus our thoughts in a healthy way.

Affirmations are positive, empowering statements.

Affirmations promote positive self-talk, and positive action.

Positive affirmations build self-confidence and self esteem.

Positive affirmations create positive pictures in our minds.

Why use them ? Saying and writing daily Affirmations help to create change from the inside out. We have several thousand thoughts a day, and a lot of them are negative!

Affirmations help you be intentional about keeping self-talk positive and focused on what you *DO* want, instead of what you *DO N'T* want. Where your attention goes, energy flows. In other words, you will get more of what you focus on!

How do I use them ? I recommend choosing a special notebook as a gratitude journal and to write affirmations twice daily, first thing in the morning and again before bed.

Always phrase affirmations in the most positive way, stated in the now or present tense.

Here Are a Few Examples:

I set healthy boundaries and preserve my energy.

I love and accept myself just as I am, even when I see where I can do better.

Life is fun. I'm willing to enjoy it.

I remember to breathe deeply and often.

I am relaxed, focused and centered. I have plenty of time for everything.

I am confident, happy and comfortable in all situations.

The more I take care of myself the more I have to offer others.

I am happy healthy and strong.

I make a special effort to connect & communicate well with others.

I am perfect in my imperfection. I am already good enough.

To create your own Affirmations, first ask yourself "Am I **interested** or **committed**?" If you're **interested**, you'll get started but don't want to get too uncomfortable, and will show up with excuses and reasons why your particular situation is impossible to improve. When you're **committed**, you show up willing to do whatever it takes.

The language between the two is very different. Interested people say "I wish I could, I want to, or I hope to..." Committed people confidently say "I intend to, I commit to, and I will..."

Give it a try! Create some affirmations to help you deal with the stress of change and transitions beginning with "I will", "I intend", or "I commit to" (instead of "I wish, I want, or I hope"). These will help you stay focused on the positive when things get tough!

A Resilient Body **Creating Abundant Energy**

“By taking care of ourselves, we can better care for those around us. When we do this, we become more available to our family, friends, and our community.” ~Cheryl Richardson

We're all familiar with the all-out energy drain—that exhausted day when no matter how enticing the activities you can't psych yourself up to do them.

What can be harder to recognize is a low-grade energy drain, where you experience an increasing lack of get-up-and-go for many of the activities you used to love. Energy zappers are all around us, some obvious, some hidden, but the good news is that there's a way to deal with almost all of them!

Here are some interesting “stress statistics” that I'd like to share with you:

- **70% of health-care costs stem from preventable diseases** (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- **Stress undermines work productivity in 9 out of 10 companies** (Industrial Society Survey)
- **70-80% of physician visits are stress related** (US Public Health Survey)
- **Obesity, diabetes, and heart disease have reached epidemic proportions—almost all are preventable.** (American Medical Association)
- **Every dollar invested in worksite wellness yields 300-600% return through reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and decreased health-related costs** (Partnership for Prevention National Coalition)

So What's Draining Your energy?

Are you so overwhelmed by everyday life that you don't have the energy to deal with setting new goals for yourself? Do you feel drained? Life coach Cheryl Richardson says that creating your best life has *more* to do with what you remove from it than what you add to it.

Everything undone, incomplete or unresolved drains your energy. Not being honest with yourself and avoiding conflict drains your energy. Every action you *take* uses energy, and every action you *don't take* uses energy.

Give yourself 2 points for every statement that is True for you and total your score in each section.

Section 1: Relationships

1. There are people in my life who continuously drain my energy.
2. I have unreturned phone calls, e-mails or letters that need to be handled.
3. I have an unresolved conflict with a family member.
4. I lack quality friendships in my life.
5. I feel a void in my life created by the lack of a romantic partner.
6. There is someone I need to forgive.
7. There is a relationship I need to end.
8. There is a phone call I dread making, and it causes me stress and anxiety.
9. I'm currently involved in a relationship that compromises my values.
10. I miss being part of a loving and supportive community.

Total Score: _____

Section 2: Environment

1. My car is in need of cleaning and/or repair.
2. My wardrobe needs updating and/or alterations.
3. I'd like to live in a different geographic location.
4. I have appliances that need repair or upgrading.
5. My home is not decorated in a way that nurtures me.
6. My closets and/or basement are cluttered and need to be cleaned.
7. Repairs need to be done around my home or apartment.
8. My home is cluttered and disorganized.
9. I miss having more beauty reflected in my environment.
10. I watch too much television.

Total Score: _____

Section 3: Body, Mind, Spirit

1. I eat food that's not good for me.
2. Something about my physical appearance bothers me.
3. It's been too long since I've been to the dentist.
4. I do not get the sleep I need to feel fully rested.
5. I'd like to exercise regularly but never seem to find the time.
6. I have a health concern for which I've avoided getting help.
7. I have emotional needs that consistently go unmet.
8. There are books that I'd love to read but never seem to find the time for.
9. I lack personal interests that are intellectually stimulating.
10. I lack a spiritual or religious practice in my life.

Total Score: _____

Section 4: Work

1. I no longer enjoy my job and have a hard time showing up each day.
2. My work is stressful and leaves me exhausted at the end of the day.
3. My office is disorganized, my desk is a mess, and I have trouble finding what I need.
4. I'm avoiding a confrontation or conflict at work.
5. I tolerate bad behavior from a boss or coworker.
6. I am not computer literate, and it gets in the way of my productivity.
7. I lack the proper office equipment that I need to do my job well.
8. My work does not allow me to express my creativity.
9. I know I need to delegate specific tasks but I am unable to let go of control.
10. I feel overwhelmed with the amount of information that enters my life in the form of mail, books, magazines and e-mail.

Total Score: _____

Section 5: Money

1. I have tax returns that are not filed or taxes are not paid.
2. I pay my bills late.
3. I spend more than I earn.
4. I don't have a plan for my financial future.
5. My credit rating is not what I'd like it to be.
6. I do not have a regular savings plan.
7. I do not have adequate insurance coverage.
8. My mortgage rate is too high, and I need to refinance.
9. I have debt that needs to be paid off.
10. My will is not up to date.

Total Score: _____ Your score in each section represents the amount of energy you spend thinking about things you've been putting off and putting up with every day.

In which section did you score the highest number of points? Does this surprise you?

What steps can you take, beginning today, to begin plugging your energy drains?

Stretch To Create Abundant Energy

Our emotions create physical tension that if not released can cause discomfort, illness, and internal stress. **Stretching in small bursts throughout the day can promote calm energy, as we stay more relaxed physically and emotionally.**

1. Shoulder Do-h

How to do: Make a fist with each hand, but allow your wrists to be loose so that your fists can wobble. Hold your elbow in the palm of your hand and lift it up so that your fist reaches to the back of your opposite shoulder. With medium strength, use a percussion-type movement with your fists to your shoulders and back of your neck.

Physical Benefits: Loosens shoulders and eases neck muscles. It invigorates the blood circulation and energy flow.

Emotional Benefits: Releases frustration, anger, irritation & general tension. Stimulates motivation

2. Chest Opener

How to do: Clasp your hands behind your back and lean forward, bringing your hands towards the ceiling (or lean into a door frame with your hands on the door frame about eye level height. Hold for 7 seconds.

Physical Benefits: Opens chest, eases breathing, helps release upper back and neck stiffness.

Emotional Benefits: Eases feelings of anxiety and overwhelm

3. Shoulder and Arm Rotations

How to do: Swing your arms in big circles: 10 forward 10 backward, just like how kids do it, without trying to control them- just let them be loose. Rotate shoulders in circles. 10 forward, 10 back.

Physical Benefits: Loosens shoulders and eases neck muscles.

Emotional Benefits: Eases frustration, and feelings of being “uptight”

4. Hips and Legs ‘Wake-Up’

How to do: Make a fist with each hand, but allow your wrists to be loose so that your fists can wobble. With medium strength, use a percussion type movement with your fists to your hips and legs up and down.

Physical Benefits: General invigoration of your body to stimulate healthy blood circulation and alertness.

Emotional Benefits: Releases emotional “stuckness” and stimulates momentum.

A Resilient Spirit

Strengthen Emotional Hardiness

“People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.” ~Elizabeth Kubler Ross

Each day, we make hundreds of choices. We choose when to wake up, what to wear, what to eat, how to get to work, and what to do when we get there. We choose who we'll talk to, what we'll say, and how we'll say it. We choose love and trust or fear and worry. We choose whether to be optimistic or fatalistic, reflective or reactive, cooperative or combative, grateful or needful.

Have you ever been with someone who absolutely drains you? They just give off negative “vibes” and tend to blame, shame, and complain all the time! It's important to be aware of the energy we put off, and help others become aware if they're becoming “energy vampires”.

It's a Universal Law of Nature that energy attracts like energy. Vibration is just another word for feelings and emotions. When we vibrate at a high level, it is governed by love, trust and peace, which is positive and constructive.

We will attract people and circumstances that vibrate at that same level. Conversely, when we are consumed by fear and worry, we will vibrate at a low, negative level, and we will attract people and circumstances that vibrate at that low level.

“Energy flows where attention goes.” It's even been measured! In Dr. David Hawkins' vibrational scale of emotion in the human body, he shows our lowest energy vibrations are when we are feeling shame, guilt, and apathy. We are radiating higher energy vibrations when we experience love, joy, fun, peace, gratitude and enlightenment!

Vibrational Scale of Emotion in the Human Body by Dr. David Hawkins

20	Shame
30	Guilt
50	Apathy
100	Fear
150	Anger
200	Courage
500	Love
540	Joy, Fun
600	Peace
1000	Gratitude, Enlightenment

Tips to Keep Your Vibes Positive!

- **Confront the Negativity in Your Life**

Shift your focus away from the negative, fearful messages you may be getting from the media, other people and your own mind. In the workplace, this can include complaining and gossiping. STAY AWAY from those who blame, shame, and complain! Also do your best to find healthy ways to express your anger. Anger can give a one-two punch to your energy level because it takes a lot of energy to contain your angry feelings, and that can be exhausting!! **"Be around people who can keep your energy and inspiration high. While you can make progress alone, it's so much easier when you have support."**~ Dr. Joe Vitale, author

- **Create and Enforce Boundaries**

Find your Voice!! Boundaries (limits) separate us from other people and situations; keep us safe from threats real or imagined. By setting boundaries (and reinforce them!), we create a "living space" for ourselves that tell us where we "end" and someone else "begins". By setting and maintaining boundaries, you will educate people how you wish to be respected. You then become a great model for others and your relationships benefit because you are happier! Boundaries also help you take *nothing* personally. What others do and say is *ALWAYS* about them, and *NEVER* about you. **"You become the average of the five people you associate with most."** ~Jim Rohn, entrepreneur

- **Say Yes to Things that Fill You Up and Say NO to Things That Drain You**

The next time you're asked to serve on another committee or join one more association, remember that "No" is a complete sentence. Make a list of all your current volunteer activities and cross off the ones that no longer serve your highest good. Your self care is always a valid excuse to say no. Don't over-explain or defend your decision. Be graceful and honest. You might say "I'm sorry, but it's just not possible for me to do that," or "I'll have to decline but thank you anyway." As you practice it will get easier!

- **Accept and Love Yourself Exactly as You Are**

No beating yourself up allowed! Celebrate the awareness of where you know you can do better.

- **Focus on Progress, Not Perfection**

Poet Leonard Cohen said "Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in. I am asking you to love your pockmarks, your scars, your size, your inability to be articulate, your awkwardness and all your imperfections. Do not run from these very welts that are a part of you. Stop, turn and embrace your humanness, ALL OF IT. Nurture yourself. Get used to loving who you are right now, with no excuses, no conditions."

- **Count Your Blessings**

Close your eyes and call to mind something to be grateful for, paying particular attention to your feelings.

What are you grateful for? What are 10 things you can choose to be grateful for right now?

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Make a choice to focus on these things often throughout the day. It's scientifically impossible to be both grateful and depressed at the same time. Write them, say them, share them, and express them!

- **Talk to Yourself Positively**

Studies show that we speak to ourselves 10,000 times a day and 80% is negative. We're programmed to protect ourselves so it's only natural that we often focus on the worse-case scenario. "I'll never close that sale." "I might lose my job today." "I don't know what to do." Positive self talk or affirmations help counter those negative tapes and remind you what is true and what you're capable of achieving. **Try this instant confidence booster:** Look in the mirror and say out loud or to yourself: "I am immune to criticism, I am beneath no one, I am fearless." It may make you laugh, but repeating this mantra will help you stand taller.

- **Ask~Believe~Receive**

Surrender to a power greater than yourself, **Ask** for guidance and **Believe** with faith that you will be guided. Open yourself to **Receive** by paying special attention to things people say, thoughts that come to you, and feelings you become aware of.

- **Be Enthusiastic!**

“Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with all your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm”. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

- **Visualize**

Every top athlete has harnessed the power of visualization. The runner can see herself breaking through the tape at the end of the race and the golfer sees the hole in one. What can you visualize? **Picture yourself reaching your goals!** It takes more than just seeing to get the results. Visualization is a three-step, repetitive process. To give it the power you need to succeed, you must **engage all your senses**. What do you hear, smell, touch and taste? And, you must **infuse it with the positive emotions** you would feel if this were a reality—like happiness, pride and maybe even relief. Commit to seeing your goals as “real” and they soon will be.

- **Choose to Be Happy!**

“One evening a Cherokee elder told his grandson about the battle that goes on inside of people. He said, “My son, the battle is between the two ‘wolves’ that live inside us all. One is Unhappiness. It is fear, worry, anger, jealousy, sorrow, self-pity, resentment, and inferiority. The other is Happiness. It is joy, love, hope, serenity, kindness, generosity, truth, and compassion.” The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf wins?” The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.” (~Marci Shimoff from *Happy for No Reason*)

I love that! Which wolf are you feeding?

About Christina Kunkle



Christina Kunkle is **founder of Synergy Life and Wellness Coaching, LLC and creator of the “Synergy Success Circle”**, a group of professional women who meet monthly for inspiration, motivation, education, and friendship as they seek work/life balance.

She is a graduate of Southern University in Tennessee, where she earned a Registered Nurse degree. After 20 years working as an R.N. in the fast paced fields of Emergency Medicine and Ambulatory surgery, she felt overwhelmed and overworked, experiencing symptoms of burn out and stress related illness. Not satisfied to settle, she set out on a journey to find happiness, balance, and restored health.

This journey with many twists and turns has helped her to go from just surviving to truly happy and thriving, finding her true calling in Life and Wellness Coaching. **She believes while each of us has a different set of tough life challenges, it's essential to find healthy mentors, seek serenity, and build resilience in order to make lasting changes forward.**

For this reason she **has dedicated her private coaching practice to helping busy women transform stress into strength instead of getting overwhelmed and frazzled when under pressure by learning how to rebound quickly with grace and ease.** She believes with a focused mindset, emotional hardiness, and physical resilience, it's possible to enjoy work/life balance, managing your energy instead of burning out like she did.

A confident and from-the-heart individual, her writings have appeared on websites and in “Bloom” magazine for women. Her passion and purpose is to use her intuitive gifts to teach, guide, and coach through speaking, workshops, and one on one with clients.

Christina's personal time is spent enjoying her home in Bridgewater, VA with Garth, her husband of 15 years, Ben, their fun-loving 13 year old son, Dani-Grace, their spirited four year old daughter, and Rocky, their handsome boxer.