



Ignition

A Professional Woman's
Guide to Energized,
Burnout-Proof Living

Chris Vasiliadis

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CHAPTER TWO

Affirm Your Strengths and Supporting Energies

“The way you choose to see the caliber of your potential determines everything you see and every action you take in this lifetime.”

~TAMA KIEVES

At times, I witness women wanting to change, but they’re waiting for all the right things to come into alignment first. Waiting for the kids to go to college. Waiting to finish a project, land the next piece of business or a new job, get their finances in order, or any other life situation to complete. If there is an urge within you to elevate your current energy, I encourage you to follow that pull now – don’t wait! Keeping the status quo is keeping you in the same place. Maybe you can’t achieve the ideal state tomorrow, but you can start to move in that direction today. It’s about making progress, not achieving perfection. Recognize that your best each day is different, depending on a variety of factors, both within and outside your control, on a given day. In the four exercises in this chapter, you’ll identify what to bring forward and what to leave behind as you start making your new energizing story a reality.

A common place for folks to begin on the road to habit change is looking at weaknesses to improve. The problem? That perspective can feel uninspiring, delay forward movement, and keep us stuck in our tracks. These are all low-energy states.

Instead, let’s look at the other side of the coin.

If you’ve lived on this planet for at least four decades, you have many valuable lessons to apply in this process of gaining more energy and vitality and burnout-proofing your life. When was the last time you stopped to consider the highlights of what you have learned, achieved and the strengths you used and honed along the way? Launching an energy- and vitality-filled life is propelled by the talents and competencies we bring to the table. I realize that (1) you may not be used to identifying your strengths and (2) you may be out of practice in prioritizing your self-care. These are the mental muscles you will incrementally build as you read this book, much as you’d use an exercise program to rebuild or tone your body’s muscles. As Kay, mother of a severely handicapped adult daughter, states, “you must make time for yourself: your peace, your spirit. Get everyone around you used to that on Day One.” Make today your new Day One. Each tip you use and/or activity you perform from *Ignition* will bring you closer to igniting your energy full throttle.

EXERCISE ONE: START BEFRIENDING YOUR STRENGTHS

I view taking on changes as akin to effectively starting a new project. When you begin a new challenge, reflecting on strengths that you bring to the table helps you to hit the ground running with an empowered foundation. We can be quick to point out our own faults or perceived weaknesses, which makes it tricky to determine our assets. If that happens to be your current go-to way of thinking, I invite you to try something different, and *list your strengths*. I've suggested five possible options from which you can choose:

OPTION 1: Take the free VIA character strengths assessment online.¹ Download the character strengths profile, noting especially your top three strengths.

OPTION 2: Look back on your life and consider times where you accomplished something. It could be related to your health, wellness, energy and vitality or to a completely different part of your life. Write down your strengths that enabled those accomplishments to occur.

OPTION 3: Which of your strengths have other people commented on to you? Pay special attention to and consider those strengths that you hear about from others and for which you repeatedly receive compliments.

OPTION 4: Ask three to five people who know you well for their feedback on your strengths and ask them to give examples of you demonstrating those strengths.

OPTION 5: Use a life review to highlight your potential, bringing it front and center. Start with a blank canvas that inspires you to create. That clean slate could be your journal, a whiteboard, poster board, or any other large sheet of paper. Consider each decade of your life, one at a time. As you review each decade, document the highlights, such as milestones, areas of growth, and/or lessons learned. Also, for each decade, note the skills and talents you used in your achievements. This is no time for modesty: treat this exercise as a treasure hunt. You're uncovering and/or reminding yourself of your life's gems. Give yourself the quality time and place this historical dig deserves; it might be a few hours on a weekend at a library or other quiet place inside or outdoors. Once you complete this review, acknowledge and celebrate the strengths you've identified.

After you have identified your strengths, choose from a variety of creative ways to consciously use them and/or keep them top of mind:

- Make flash cards, one for each strength, using index cards. Pick one at the start of each day to focus on, or keep the deck handy to flip through when you're facing a challenge and need to be reminded of your strengths.
- Produce a collage of your strengths and/or images that symbolize those words.
- Create an audio recording of your strengths to play back to yourself when you need a boost or a reminder.
- Each day, set an intention to use at least one of your strengths in some way.
- Consider starting a "kudos" folder in your email or a "kudos" document on your phone and store any compliments or testimonials there.

About the Author

Chris Vasiliadis inspires people to use their well-being as their secret weapon for successfully leading their work and non-work life. Since founding her business, Priority Wellness, in 2008, she has helped countless individuals energize their health and improve their performance. Blending compassion, firmness, and fun, she works with those who are tired of putting their health on the back burner, unhappy/unfocused in their wellness, and/or concerned about burnout. As a National Board Certified Health & Wellness Coach, she works one-on-one and in group settings in a variety of ways, including with private clients, a corporation's employees, or patients in a healthcare environment.

She speaks on various related wellness topics at networking groups and events, conferences, inside companies and higher education settings. Chris has been interviewed on different podcasts, and is available for future interviews.

Chris's clients ultimately instill habits that make their health thrive, burnout-proof their lives, and powerfully perform at their best. Choosing to prioritize her wellness after her multiple sclerosis diagnosis in 2005, Chris has been relapse-free since 2007. She's a voracious reader with an affinity for historical fiction, a huge foodie who loves day trips and visiting different restaurants, and a die-hard Red Sox fan. Chris lives outside the Boston area with her husband, Peter.

For media inquiries, visit www.prioritywellness.com/media.

For continued monthly tips, subscribe to Chris's *Energizing You* newsletter at www.prioritywellness.com.

Endorsements

“A thoughtful, impactful treatment of a topic that scares a lot of us. How do we focus on our own wellness? Where do we start? Chris addresses these subjects with love and compassion, keeping it simple and approachable. I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Ignition*, and found it to be very user-friendly. It allows the reader to do as much as she feels able to at the time, also knowing that there are more ideas in the book to refer back to. *Ignition* never feels overwhelming or implies ‘you must do all of these things’.”

~Leah Carey: Leadership and Organization Development Consultant and Coach, Entrepreneur, Author, parallelminds.com.

“Easy to use, warm, encouraging, practical, empowering, engaging and inspiring. I’ll be recommending *Ignition* to clients and especially like that they can choose specific areas of focus depending on what is most pressing.”

~Deb Busser, Executive Leadership Coach, energyspringleadership.com

“*Ignition* is packed with helpful ideas and information. I’ve already put a few ideas into practice toward accomplishing my top goals.”

~Susan Altman, Managing Editor in policy journalism