



Call to **ACTION**

Chris Freytag
motivates people
to make lasting change.

by Sandra Bienkowski

If **Chris Freytag** were your personal fitness trainer, she'd find out what motivates you. She'd listen to your litany of reasons why your life is too hectic for exercise or eating healthy, but she'd figure out a solution just for you. And then she'd encourage you to take action.

"I am motivated to find that 'a-ha' moment for people," says the fitness entrepreneur and author.

Freytag has dedicated her adult life to motivating people to lead healthier lives. A contributing editor to *Prevention* magazine, she's also written two books, *Shortcuts to Big Weight Loss*, and her latest, *2-Week Total Body Turnaround*. She also has appeared on NBC's *Today* show and MSNBC's *Weekend Update*.

As founder and owner of Motivating Bodies, a company that provides fitness training and motivational speaking, Freytag knows firsthand how difficult it can be for small-business owners to find time to devote to healthier lifestyles. "I am my consumer," she says.

An active teenager, Freytag was a runner and cheerleader, getting the bug for aerobics during the Jane Fonda era in the 1980s. Freytag wanted to carve out a career in fitness back then, even though it wasn't as popular as it is today. Her college counselor told her to think about a field with a major, so she selected her other love, journalism. When she ended up going into fitness, she used her journalism degree as an asset to develop her business.

Eliminating the Excuses

Now she's certified in almost everything fitness-related—yoga to weight management—and uses her knowledge to empower others. She says motivation is essential in getting people to change, "because everyone knows how to lose weight. It's not rocket science: Eat less, move more. So why isn't everyone doing it?"

Starting May 3, Freytag will share her motivational strategies with *SUCCESS* readers in the 30-day Get Fit Challenge blog series. "I don't want people to just read it; I want them to take action and engage in change."

Freytag helps people find the moment when it clicks and they say, *I need to do this*. She finds that motivation works full circle—she helps people, and, in turn, "People fill my energy bucket, because I feel really good when I

help someone else."

She's accustomed to finding solutions for people with packed work schedules and limited time. "I had a middle-aged woman ask me, 'I am a single parent.

I work eight-plus hours a day. I commute two hours a day, and I have three kids. You tell me when I am going to exercise.' That's a hard situation," says Freytag, who herself has three teens.

"But that's when we have to break the rules, and instead of an hour of exercise a day, I ask, 'Is there a way you could do a 10-minute workout at lunch? Could you walk at lunch? Could you do a half hour at home with the kids? Could you do physical activity at home? Can you lift weights on weekends?' I believe there's always going to be an answer; it's just going to be different based on people and their lifestyles."

Real Success Entails Real Work

Freytag says results happen from setting goals, making small changes and doing the hard work. "I like the quote, 'The difference between a goal and a dream is a deadline.' Dreams are fabulous, but turn them into goals, put a deadline on them. You have to be accountable."

She thinks people need doable goals and stretch goals. Doable goals include those attainable in the next week, like working out twice or changing one bad food habit. Stretch goals could include losing 75 pounds or running a marathon. "I really believe people have to get an 'A' on something to build self-confidence and take the next step. If you are failing all the time, you are never going to reach that stretch goal. Progress gives self-esteem," she says.

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"I totally love that whole over-the-edge, make-it-happen, *The Biggest Loser*, dream-big thinking. But if you are a normal person, set something you can reach, so every week you are just inching toward it," Freytag says.

Setting a goal you can reach is the concept behind her book *2-Week Total Body Turnaround*. She admits her program requires work and commitment—an hour of exercise a day—but it gives people self-esteem when they realize they can do it. And then it builds momentum. "People say, 'If I can do this the first week, I can do anything the following week.'"

Although she is encouraging, Freytag doesn't accept excuses. When clients work out but don't see desired results, "I say, 'Well, what's your heart rate? How hard are you trying? What intensity are you working at?'"

It's all about putting in the effort. "It's like when people say to me, 'You're so lucky.' I am not lucky. I worked hard to get what I earned. With most people



who look like they are in good shape, it didn't happen from luck. Sure, there are some people who are set up nicely through genetics. Genetics loads your gun. But environment pulls your trigger."

Plan for Stress

Everyday life can play havoc with your health if you let it, Freytag says. We eat too much processed food because we don't think we have time to eat healthy. We lead more sedentary lives, thanks in part to technology—"You can just look at the newspaper on your computer instead of going out to your mailbox," she says.

Freytag doesn't tell people to slow down, but rather to find time for themselves—even if they are the busiest people in the world. "Stress used to be something that had a deadline on it. Today, we swim in stress. We bathe in it."

One consequence of stress is emotional eating. "People will eat mindlessly, due to stress or physical fatigue, and it can be a disaster," she says.

But food journaling can help make people aware of what they eat, and it's a component of having a fitness plan, Freytag says. "Just like you do for your business, you have to write a plan. It's your map." She says plans can help people avoid getting derailed when life becomes stressful.

When people she hasn't met heed her advice and thank her for motivating them through her books or exercise DVDs, Freytag reacts with surprise. "I am like 'Really? Because I don't even know you, and I feel so great that I motivated you.'" Yet she knows she has the gift for motivating people because it's something she felt early in her life. "I love that I can use that skill along with the things I love," she says.

And if she could leave you with just one small tip, it is this: "A healthy lifestyle is not something you are on," Freytag says. "It is a journey, and it is centered around constant motivation." **S**

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Chris Freytag's
Get Fit Challenge,
go to

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Real Results

The Three C's are Key

If you want to see lasting change, Chris Freytag says you have to incorporate three C's into your life.

- 1. Commitment.** "Let your loved ones know what you are going to do so they can help you and encourage you."
- 2. Convenience.** "You have to find a program that is convenient. If I tell you that the best program to lose weight is swimming, and you hate to swim, how long are you sticking with my program? That's not to say you are going to like everything, but it has to be convenient. It has to be close by. It has to be easy for you to get there and do it. It has to be something you kind of like or maybe a friend goes with you."
- 3. Consistency.** "You have to do it all the time. You can't just work out once every two months and expect a change. That's just common sense. Everyone knows this. Consistency over time is key. You can't expect once or twice and it will last you for a lifetime. You can't run once every three weeks and expect your cardio endurance to improve."

