



move more! and smile!

a conversation with chris freytag

WRITTEN BY SANDRA BIENKOWSKI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN CHRISTENSON



IF YOU ASK CHRIS FREYTAG WHO HER HERO IS, she will say Katie Couric. She will tell you it's because Katie is a great mom, who is smart, energetic, and has a self-deprecating sense of humor. But all of these adjectives easily describe Chris. With her boundless energy, permanent smile, and her rapid-fire way of speaking, she is on a mission to help people take that first step toward living healthier lives.

A nationally recognized health and wellness expert, Chris encourages people to have a positive attitude, eat clean, and move more. And she walks the talk. "My mom always says I've never stopped talking and I've never stopped moving," says Chris.

She's not kidding. Zigzagging across the country, Chris maintains a schedule many people would find hard to keep. One day, she flies to the east coast for "QVC" appearances showcasing her healthy kitchen products. Early the next day, she teaches a class at Lifetime Fitness back in her home base of Minnesota and then heads back to the airport to fly to a *Prevention* magazine photo shoot, where she's a contributing fitness editor. And that's just a snapshot of one week.

It's probably no coincidence that Chris speaks

“I really enjoy helping people and motivating people. The fitness industry is filled with positive people and I hope to inspire others to lead healthier and more positive, upbeat lives.”



nationally about time management, but don't expect her to softball advice to you. She will be the first to tell you there's a difference between being busy and being productive. She doesn't want to hear any excuses about how you can't "find the time" to exercise. (She will tell you to create the time.) And when she's speaking across the country about various wellness topics, she may unleash one of her favorite quotes: "Someone busier than you is running right now." Chris believes in personal responsibility, but she delivers her message with her signature upbeat, friendly, and infectious style.

Chris started her own consulting business, Motivating Bodies, more than two decades ago and she works as chairman of the board for the American Council on Exercise (ACE). Chris also appears regularly on NBC's Minneapolis/St. Paul news affiliate KARE-11, in a segment aptly named "Motivation Monday." But you will still find her at her kids' sporting events and cooking dinner at home because family is her number-one priority.

Growing up in Milwaukee, by Lake Michigan, Chris moved to Minneapolis twenty-five years ago. Her husband's family has a lake home in Nisswa that's been in the family for more than fifty years. Jim spent all of his summers there, just like his mother before him. "We have passed the love of the lake house and the lake on

to our kids. They love to go to the lake house as much as possible," says Chris. "The house is filled with history and memories of friends and family boating, swimming, wake-boarding, cooking, sitting by the fire, and enjoying sunsets and sunrises."

Chris and Jim have been married for twenty-three years and only one of their three grown children is still at home. "Our oldest son, twenty-one, is in college and is a musician. Our daughter, nineteen, is a professional ballet dancer, and our youngest son is still in high school and an avid hockey player." The other member of the Freytag clan is their beloved dog, a miniature schnauzer, who hangs out with Chris in her home office.

While Chris loves being an entrepreneur and has a big online following of fitness enthusiasts, she says one drawback of her job is not being able to unplug. "When you work from home, you never get away from your job. I work 24/7 sometimes. When you are in the business of helping people, it's easy to get overcommitted."

At forty-seven, she jokes that menopause is her motivation to stay fit. "Actually, I am just in love with endorphins and I love to feel strong and capable," she says. A self-described extrovert, Chris loves to teach group fitness classes. She also adores the sun, so she takes her classes outside from May to October. "I love the warm

weather and sunshine, and I love to exercise with other people because it pumps me up. I use my live classes to practice and rehearse my videos. If people going to my classes love it, I know it will make a great DVD."

Chris now has fifteen workout DVDs, five published books (including a healthy-eating cookbook called *Choose This!*), and numerous healthy living kitchen products.

Chris recently released a workout DVD series called HIIT (high-intensity interval training) that features the types of workouts she loves most—high-energy workouts that combine cardio and strength training. "It's more challenging, time-effective, and results-oriented," says Chris. It's in line with her "Git 'er done" philosophy and it's the same reason she prefers to do her workouts early between 5 A.M. and 9 A.M.



Appearing on "The Today Show" and in national magazines, such as *SUCCESS* and *Prevention*, she advises people to start eating and preparing foods as close to their natural state as possible, avoid eating processed foods, and commit to regular exercise. She also encourages people to find ways to move more every day, in addition to scheduled exercise. "It's not about chasing perfect," says Chris. "It's about bringing forth effort every single day, that's when real transformation happens.

"I really enjoy helping people and motivating people.

The fitness industry is filled with positive people and I hope to inspire others to lead healthier and more positive, upbeat lives."

Chris regularly makes healthy recipes from her own cookbook, (many of which she shares on her website) including homemade hummus and guacamole to enjoy with fresh veggies. Some other family favorites include red pepper nachos, Asian chicken kebobs, homemade energy bars, and zucchini and blueberry muffins. She has a tall order to fill when all of the kids are home because her sons are meat eaters and her daughter is a vegan. Chris describes herself as a flexitarian which means she is a vegetarian, but eats the occasional chicken or fish.

She loves to grill out at the lake house. "I grill black bean burgers, beet burgers, and we eat lots of veggies. My family also requests homemade sweet potato fries—and we all love them." She also makes healthy desserts to indulge her sweet tooth.

With her focus on family, Chris says her ultimate goal would be to find a way to make an impact on people, but work fewer hours. "That would mean even more time at the lake with my family," Chris says. "Minnesota means lake life to me," Freytag says. "It's an amazing place."  

chrisfreytag.com



FAVORITE PART OF LAKE LIFE:

Relaxing (and sometimes unplugging) in the sun by the water.

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY:

Paddle Boarding!

FAVORITE ACTIVITY FOR A RAINY DAY:

Watching movies with my family or playing board games.