

Getting the Energy to Go for Your Dreams

2 in a series

Wordcount: 674

By Kathie Hightower and Holly Scherer

“Go for my dreams?” you ask. “I wish I could, but I can hardly get myself out of bed in the morning? And by the end of the day, I’m dragging. About all I can manage is to slump in front of the television to relax a bit, get to bed and start all over again the next day. I don’t have any energy left to get going on something new, especially something as big as my dreams!”

Sound familiar? My seminar partner, Holly Scherer, and I hear this all the time.

For years, as we did our Joyful Living Seminars for military spouses, we included some basic self care, along with information on stress and energy management, but this portion was at the end of our four-hour workshop. And often, we didn’t have time to get around to it.

It finally hit us that we had the order wrong. If you are tired and running on empty, the last thing you are going to do is move forward towards your goals and dreams. You won’t even have the energy to get excited about the idea! So we revamped the workshop and addressed self-care and energy concepts first.

Plus, Holly, the mom of twin infants, dealing with her husband being deployed, was a bit low on energy herself. Giving all her energy to taking care of children, she would often say, “If I can comb my hair and brush my teeth in the same day — it’s a good day.” That is all she could give to herself. Something had to change! So we started really researching this energy thing. Through research and lots of personal trial and error (that continues today) we learned a lot of great stuff to share with our audiences.

Before we get into that great stuff, let me mention a mindset shift that has to happen first. For most women, especially mothers, and especially military spouses, self care is not even on their radar screens (a little military analogy that I hear my husband use all the time). With all the demands on your time, especially if you are also dealing with a move or a deployment, time for yourself just doesn’t happen.

Well, you have to change that thinking. And this is the best visual we can come up with. Remember being on an airplane? What does the flight attendant say every time? “If we lose cabin pressure, an orange mask will drop from above — put it on and breathe normally.” My response to that is “yeah right, no one in that situation will be breathing normally, I guarantee you.” The flight attendant goes on to say, “If you are traveling with a small child, put your mask on first!” You can be of no use to your child if you are not breathing. And the same is true in daily life. You can be of no real use to others if you are running on empty. Self care is not selfish. It is not a luxury; it’s a necessity! Get that thru your head and into your heart before we go any further.

So this week work on the concept that self care is a necessity. The bottom line is: “NO ONE ELSE IS GOING TO DO THIS FOR YOU!”

Next column I’ll share some simple, practical energy tips. To get prepared you might want to pick up two things. Okay, they aren’t absolutely necessary, but they can help. One is a journal for yourself. You can use a simple spiral notebook, but I always prefer to find one that brings me joy because of the cover and the kind of paper. I also do like spiral books because you can fold them back and write more easily on each page. The second thing is a calendar system of some kind. Whatever you use now is fine — a Day Planner, a Franklin Planner, a simple Hallmark pocket calendar or a wall calendar. Get ready to get energized!

©2000, Holly Scherer and Kathie Hightower

Kathie Hightower and Holly Scherer lead workshops and are the authors of *Help! I’m a Military Spouse — I Want a Life Too!*
For more information, go to: militaryspousehelp.com