

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 108:

Be More, Not Less with Nia Shanks

[shownotes at jenriday.com/108](http://jenriday.com/108)

Jen Riday: Hey there everyone, Jen here, and welcome back to Vibrant Happy Women. So glad you're here. So I have created a questionnaire and I need all of you listening to fill it out so that I can create content that will benefit your life. You can fill it out, and it's completely anonymous, at jenriday.com/survey. Guess what? When you fill it out, you enter yourself to win a \$200 gift card from Amazon. So, again, that's at jenriday.com/survey. I'm asking questions about what kind of topics you would like to listen to in the future, a little bit about you so I know who you are out there, "Who is listening?" I have a hunch that most of your women, but I could be wrong. But I want to know a little bit more about you. Are you moms? Are you married? Are you single? Just things like that so I can tailor the conversation to you. So one more time, fill that out today if you can. Hit pause now, it shouldn't take you long; that's at jenriday.com/survey. Last week I spoke with Courtney Donnelly all about creating a more vibrant home and building your tribe of vibrant women. Well, I have something amazing coming that will help you to build a tribe, virtual or in person; keep listening, tuning in to hear more details about what is coming.

In the meantime, I have some more great Vibrant Happy Women content coming for you. And for today's show I'm talking with Nia Shanks all about weight lifting, which when I finished recording this right now, I'm going to go do. I've been weight lifting for over 6 months now and I love it. And a lot of you think, "Oh, it's going to mean I'm going to get bulky and I don't want to look bulky." Well, actually that's not true. It builds muscle mass, which burns more fat. It boosts your energy, boosts your confidence; so many great benefits, and that's what I'll be talking about in this episode with Nia Shanks. So even if you don't think you want to lift weights, you can listen to learn how to have more strength in your workout routine. Let's go ahead and dive in.

My guest today is Nia Shanks and she's a coach, writer and author of 'Lift Like A Girl' with a bachelor's in exercise physiology from the University of Louisville. She specializes in helping women unleash their awesome with an empowering approach to health and fitness. Nia's philosophy revolves around strength training programs with a focus on getting stronger and more flexible, obsession-free, and nutrition principles. Through her popular blog and online coaching courses, Nia has helped countless women look beyond quick weight loss and discover the amazing body they never knew they had. I love this already, Nia, welcome to the show.

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Nia Shanks: Thank you so much for having me.

Jen Riday: Yeah. So as soon as I saw that word 'obsession-free' and 'discovering the amazing body we never knew we had', I knew that this is going to be amazing because it's so important to be positive. And so I guess we want to start with one of your quotes, but I can't wait to launch into this discussion, for sure.

Nia Shanks: Yeah. So I'm a big fan of a quote by Marcus Aurelius which is, "A blazing fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that is thrown into it."

Jen Riday: Mmm! Marcus Aurelius. What does that mean to you?

Nia Shanks: To me, it means we all have experiences that we probably, at the time going through them, would have rather not experienced. But we can choose to make something beautiful and magnificent out of everything we go through and become more resilient and stronger and wiser if we just choose to take that route.

Jen Riday: Hmm, yeah, I get that. Well, so how has that inspired you to, you know, do what you're doing and create this amazing book, 'Lift Like A Girl; Be More, Not Less'? I love that.

Nia Shanks: So if you don't mind, I'll give you a little bit of a backstory.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And many years ago, I actually became a certified personal trainer when I was 19, and it's a career I got into because of my mom. She was actually the first woman personal trainer in our area. And so she introduced me to the weight room when I was a teenager. And through watching my mom be a very strong woman mentally, physically, in every way possible, it inspired me and I wanted to do the same thing.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: And after I became a certified trainer, a couple years after that, I fell into binge eating and disordered eating habits. And it happened simply because I was trying to learn more about nutrition, I wanted to be more knowledgeable and so I experimented with counting calories and trying a few different diets. And that got me into binge eating because I had been restricting foods and labeling foods good and bad. And so, you know, that led to the whole, if I ate something bad, then I was bad. And I had guilt and shame. And... and so for about 3 and a half years, it was just something that was getting progressively worse where I was binge eating every single day. I even developed some health issues from that where I had to go to my doctor to get some scans. And in combination with that, it wasn't just the binge eating, it was the self-hatred I had for myself and my body because, for one, I was a personal trainer. And because I was binge eating so much, I was putting on weight and I just no longer looked the same so I felt like a fraud. I felt like I... I had no right to be a trainer. And then I was

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also completely ashamed because I had no control. I felt like I had no control over the binge eating and my mindset with nutrition. And at the same time, I hated my body. I hated everything about myself.

And so at that point, exercise was nothing but a punishment. It was something I used to love. I loved strength training. I loved getting stronger. But at that point, it turned into something I did to punish myself for having excess on my body; punishing myself for overeating, punishing myself for knowing I would overeat later that day. And this just culminated into just... it was all day and all I thought about was how much I hated my body.

Jen Riday: Uh!

Nia Shanks: And that's no way to live.

Jen Riday: Yeah, self-loathing, mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: Trying different diets and everything just trying to escape, it's like, "Well, surely, this diet will help me love myself. And, surely, if I can finally lose this weight, I'll be happy again."

Jen Riday: Yeah, yeah. And everyone listening is nodding their heads. I mean, this is the exact story almost every woman relates to, I think. So tell us there's a way out. (Laughs)

Nia Shanks: There... well, yeah. And so what I finally realized, for one, was that another diet was not the solution to problems created by a previous diet. And I realized that I needed to get out of that roller coaster of going on a diet then binge eating then self-hatred then trying another diet. And I finally realized I needed to simplify things. I didn't need something obsessive or rigid. I didn't need to revolve my life around anything. I knew that the goal and nutrition should be to spend the least amount of time thinking about nutrition as possible. And that's what eventually led to... to me, finding the simplest most basic guidelines that are responsible for the majority of our health and even appearance results. But what I really started to do, especially when it came to... to working out, you know, I realized I want to get back to a place where this is something I love doing because you're not going to keep doing something that's a chore or that's a punishment because that's not fun. You know, I wanted to look forward to working out again.

And so what I chose to do was, I committed saying, "You know, I've got to break out of this; this binge eating." But not just that, my mental state desperately needed to be transformed.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: And so what I committed to doing was saying, "Every time I go into the gym, the only thing that matters is getting a little stronger; doing a little bit better than I did last week. I'm just going to get strong and take this journey and make sure it's something I enjoy doing and that it's empowering and that it makes me feel good about myself; that it builds me up, not just physically, but mentally. And so that's what I started doing. And through that focus of just getting stronger, I learned to

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appreciate my body for the ways in which it was unique. And what I discovered was that, you know, all women, were all built very differently. Some of us are taller, some of us are shorter. Some of us have wider hips, some of us have narrower hips. Some of us have long legs and long arms and short torsos like me. And so my body type, what I discovered, I'm naturally good at deadlifting, which is basically pulling a weighted barbell off the floor. My body structure makes me naturally stronger in that lift than some other ones.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And so what I decided to do was say, "Hey, this is what I am naturally good at so I'm going to become great at it."

Jen Riday: No, yeah.

Nia Shanks: And it is through all these experiences that has helped me to develop my philosophy with strength training and teaching this to other women. And so it's about saying, "You know, let's find... let's get you in the gym, for one, and focus on getting stronger." Because so many women don't realize the physical strength that they have, and it's about taking the time to unleash that and even discover what your naturally good at. Because, you know, maybe... maybe you have a different body structure where you have a longer torso and shorter legs and that's going to more than likely make a woman naturally inclined to squat really well.

Jen Riday: Oh!

Nia Shanks: And so it's a wonderful transformation I've seen with women. I've had clients say, "Oh, I have a short, stocky build; I hate it." And I say, "You know, how about we see what it can let you do really well?"

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And so with a lot of time, these women, they'll see, "Man, I'm good squatting! I just keep adding weight to the bar. This lift feels great. I can't believe I'm squatting my body weight for reps." And so this really allows them to appreciate their body in a way they never have before. Instead of looking at their legs going, "Oh, they're short and stocky," they go, "Oh, my gosh! My legs are strong! My legs are awesome!" You know, that's what I love about strength training is, it allows you to discover the incredible things your body can do and to appreciate it in an entirely new way. So that's essentially what my philosophy has been about.

Jen Riday: Hmm, that's great. I remember when I first started weightlifting, my trainer was checking out to see, you know, where I was strong, where I was weak. And his conclusion, I don't know what this really means, was that I was balanced. I had good upper and lower body strength or a balanced amount of each. So what can you tell me about my body based on that information? Does that mean something? What am I going to be good at, Nia? (Laughs)

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Nia Shanks: I mean, I should clarify, I mean, we can be good at any lift.

Jen Riday: Okay.

Nia Shanks: It's just we you naturally have the... you know, you might naturally be stronger at a certain lift due to certain biomechanics.

Jen Riday: Yeah, right.

Nia Shanks: But, yeah, most certainly, I encourage women to be strong completely, you know, in all major compound lifts.

Jen Riday: I'm super long-legged and have a small torso. So maybe that will give you, what should I be good at with long legs? (Laughs)

Nia Shanks: More likely, if you also have long arms as well, again, deadlifting; just because the...

Jen Riday: Oh, yeah, I am good at that, yeah. Yeah, I just did 185 yesterday.

Nia Shanks: Nice!

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: Awesome!

Jen Riday: Is that good? Okay, good.

Nia Shanks: That's rad, absolutely!

Jen Riday: Woo-hoo!

[Laughter]

Jen Riday: Thank you, that makes me feel so good. Well, so if someone's listening and they're thinking, "Why should I lift weights?" can you just walk us through why weight lifting is so, so good for us?

Nia Shanks: Yeah, I like to kind of turn that around with a question, and it's, you know, "Why shouldn't women strength train?"

Jen Riday: Ooh, yeah.

Nia Shanks: Because there are too many benefits beyond building muscle and getting that toned

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look and burning fat, that's the reason most people workout. But, to me, those are great benefits, but there are so many more that I would say are even better. And one of them being an increase in self-confidence, and it happens every time I train women and... and they do things they never thought they could; whether it's traditional push-ups or their first chin up or dead lifting their body weight for reps. They just develop this incredible sense of confidence that they don't just have in the gym, but it carries over into every part of their life. And, to me, that is the beautiful thing about strength training. And I have women tell me stories about how they got so much self-confidence, they finally asked for a raise at work or they tried activities they were too intimidated to try before.

Jen Riday: Wow!

Nia Shanks: And, to me, that... that's what I think is so incredible about strength training. And people think I'm making this up and it's, you know, so like just hyperbole. But...

Jen Riday: It has something to do with increase testosterone because I know that relates to confidence. And lifting does increase testosterone just a bit, right, after you lift right? Or is it... I don't know.

Nia Shanks: I don't think it's so much that. I think... I mean, you do get, you know, endorphins and all those wonderful things. But I think, for women, you're choosing to challenge yourself, you're choosing to put yourself in an uncomfortable situation because, as you know, lifting a heavy weight off the floor is physically and mentally challenging.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And I think by putting ourselves in these situations voluntarily and pushing ourselves to get stronger, we realize that we can handle a lot more than we may realize.

Jen Riday: Yeah!

Nia Shanks: And I think let's see that, "You know, I'm choosing to put myself in this situation and I... I can handle this. I can do this. I've got it." And so it helps to say, "You know, these other things in real life, if I can lift this heavy weight multiple times and grunt through it, you know, I can go and ask for a raise. You know, because what are they going to say, 'No'? That's a worst-case scenario, so be it.

Jen Riday: And there's something mental about knowing that it makes you elite to be a weightlifter as a woman, especially because some people just don't have that commitment. So to be able to say, "I'm a weight lifter. I'm committed," it just gives you such a confidence for the title alone, I think.

Nia Shanks: That... yes, and shattering so many barriers because so many women think, you know, depending on when they grew up, if they were in school and they had to do push-ups, they had to do quote 'girl push-ups' on their knees and, you know, they might have been told they could never do a body weight chin up. And it can take quite a bit of time for some women to progress to doing a chin up, but once they do it and they realize, "I can do this."

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Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: It makes them ask, "What else am I capable of doing?" And that's what I think is so beautiful about it. And, you know, some other important things for women is building bone density, which is critical especially as we get older to ward off osteopenia and osteoporosis. But thanks to the popularity of weight training, they're doing more and more research showing how it can help even cognition.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm, I heard.

Nia Shanks: And possibly even help fight at all... or, you know, hopefully help prevent cancer and other things. So, to me, there are too many phenomenal incredible benefits to Street training that, to me, there's no reason not to do it.

Jen Riday: Yeah. So you said strength and confidence, but then by cognition, you mean memory and... and just cognitive performance like fighting dementia?

Nia Shanks: Yes! They're showing that it can be helpful for all of these things in when older adults as we get older.

Jen Riday: Wow! Oh yeah! I don't want to get old, I'm going to live forever! I'm going to have an amazing brain when I'm 90 because I'm lifting. Yes. (Laughs)

Nia Shanks: And that's something; there's too many phenomenal reasons, and improves stability and balance and all of these things.

Jen Riday: Yes.

Nia Shanks: There's too many; there's too long of a list of benefits and not to do it to some capacity. Even if... you know, I tell people, "Even if you just want to start with just 2 days a week, that's a phenomenal start."

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And you get the benefits from to where it's something every woman needs to do to some degree.

Jen Riday: Yeah. So I think the big thing that holds women back from lifting, and it used to be the truth for me as well, is I remember in high school, many of the women who lifted just seemed so bulky and it didn't look feminine. So can you address that for us?

Nia Shanks: Yeah. Usually if people are complaining about being bulky, it usually just means that they need to shed some body fat.

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Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: Because building muscle takes work, it takes time and you're not going to just start lifting and... and just bulk up. Because what happens for most women... now, this is something I have a lot of clients that experience, is they don't see a big change on their weight on the scale.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: And they think that means that they're just getting bulky, but generally what is happening for women is they build muscle and lose body fat.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And so if you're... if you build 10 pounds of muscle and you lose 10 pounds of body fat, the scale stays the same, but you will look drastically different.

Jen Riday: Oh, yeah.

Nia Shanks: And so that's the big thing as I tell women, "You know, just focus more on how you feel, how your clothes fit, how you look." And depending on where somebody's starting, the scale can be useful if they have excess weight that they need to shed.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: But I don't want them to get obsessed over it by any means because it's so easy for us as women to look at the number on the scale and to define ourselves by that. We allow that number to affect our self worth.

Jen Riday: Yes! Oh, that's so disempowering! Ladies, throw your freaking scales away and just look in the mirror. Yeah. (Laughs)

Nia Shanks: Yeah, because it's so hard for a lot of women to look at the scale objectively. We look at it very subjectively. And if we get on there and the number's higher than we think, we let that ruin our entire day.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And we allow it to define us. And that is something I don't want any woman to do. We are not defined by any number; weight, age, anything of that nature.

Jen Riday: Yeah. And that's one thing I like about lifting; you can constantly notice, "Hey I'm lifting more. That means I'm stronger." It's so empowering to be able to measure it that way, "Oh, I'm stron-

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ger. I have to have more muscle because I just lifted more there."

Nia Shanks: And that's what I love about is, you know, every week if you just do a little better than you did during the workout the week before, you know, that is constant progress. And the really fun thing about tracking it is, over months, you go... you know, you can look and say, "Oh my gosh! I started out squatting an empty 45 pound barbell and now, I'm doing 115 pounds for 8 reps."

Jen Riday: Wow!

Nia Shanks: Which is... it's super awesome to watch yourself get stronger and to have that documented proof.

Jen Riday: Aaw, that's so cool. Well, so I've heard it said that women actually can't really bulk up like men and so we shouldn't even really be afraid of it. When women lift, it's more a toning because we just don't have the testosterone to bulk, bulk, bulk up and look like Arnold Schwarzenegger, for example. So that also might... is that true? And if it is, I guess that would help alleviate the fear of that bulkiness as well.

Nia Shanks: Women can actually build a substantial amount of muscle, but to reach like your genetic threshold, it takes a lot of work and it takes years of work. But this is the thing that I encourage women is, you know, don't worry about what you have heard about, you know, "Don't lift weights because you'll get bulky," because building muscle takes work it, takes time. But at the same time, building muscles something women want but they oftentimes don't realize it because if they're used to seeing pictures of a very large bulk of women, they think, "Oh, if I lift weights, I'm going to look like that in the year." You absolutely will not because getting that amount of muscle takes a ton of time and effort.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: But what will happen is, you will build muscle where you want it like your butt. (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Uh-huh.

Nia Shanks: You'll get a firm butt; it'll get round and your... you know, you get that nice toned appearance that women equate. But all that means is you build muscle and you lost fat. And strength training is such a great tool for helping you to do that. But what I just... I tell women, I say, "Don't worry about, you know, any of these myths, just choose to get stronger, choose to eat for improving your health and improving your performance and just let your body do what it'll do on its own. Discover the amazing shape that your body can take when you choose to get strong and you choose to nourish it. And, you know, forget about any of the... the possible myths that might make you hesitant."

Jen Riday: It's true. And if it's going to help fight aging, mentally and physically, I'm so all-in because I don't want to lose my ability, physically or... you know, I just want to be able to move and do like I am now, for years.

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Nia Shanks: Yeah. And, you know, my mom is still a personal trainer and she specializes in senior citizens. And one of her clients is in her 90s and she lives independently and she credits working with my mom because of that because my mom makes sure she's strong enough to in and out of her car, in and out of her tub, to be... to have balance and stability.

Jen Riday: Nice!

Nia Shanks: Yeah. And so... you know, and that's what I want people to realize too is that, "You're never too late to start strength training."

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: You know, this woman's in her 90s and still strength trains. So... (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: We should all start and keep doing it forever.

Jen Riday: Ah. Well, so if someone is feeling inspired, they want to keep their body physically strong and their mind mentally sharp, they're going to do this, how do they even start? What would you recommend to start with weight training? Do they have to go get a personal trainer? Can they do something from home? What does it look like?

Nia Shanks: You know, I always recommend trying to start strength training with free weights, just because it's easier to scale to your ability and to track performance improvement. But more than anything, I recommend that people begin with a few basic exercises that they can learn quickly because none of us like trying something and sucking had it from the very beginning.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: So if you learn exercises that can be mastered very quickly, you can have success from the first workout. And, you know, I did kind of write a book that tells you exactly how to do that.

Jen Riday: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Nia Shanks: You know, that's what lifts 'Like A Girl's for. It has an introductory program that specifically uses these exercises that you can learn quickly. Like a goblet squat, an elevated push-up, an inverted row; those type of movements. That way, you... you can teach yourself how to do these things if you commit... you know, there is always a learning curve with any new activity, but if you take the time to master these movements, you know, after a few workouts, you'll very quickly master them and have the hang of how to do them properly. And then you can start loading them and getting stronger. So that's what I tell people to do is, "Just choose a few big compound exercises that you can learn quick-

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ly, and then make your sole priority, improving your performance using heavier weight or performing more reps." And I generally like 3 total body workouts performed every week like on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule. This way, you're hitting your body with enough training frequency. And because you're training your body every time you do it, you get to practice these moves frequently, which will help improve your efficiency at those moves.

Jen Riday: Now, I think I read somewhere that, when you do strength training, the fat-burning lasts way longer than almost any other exercise. Is that true or a crazy rumor?

Nia Shanks: I mean, it does... it does elevate your resting metabolism a bit, but some people drastically overshoot it. It will be elevated some, but not to the extent that some people are like, "You're going to burn tons more calories forever!" There is an after burn effect that some people like to call it, but it's... I think it's, you know, maybe like maybe an extra 50 calories or so.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: But still it's... it is just a phenomenal activity to do, you know, regardless of any of those after burn benefits.

Jen Riday: Right, right. Well, so in your book, in chapter 2, you talk about how exercise isn't punishment. And can you talk more about that; changing our mindset about it so we don't think, "Oh, this is hard. Working out is hard. I can't commit," you know, those stories we tell ourselves? How do you get people to change their thoughts on things like that?

Nia Shanks: I think first that the most important thing is, you know, understanding why you're choosing to work out. And, you know, I always encourage women say, you know, "Get ready to discover how strong you can truly be. Get ready to discover what your body is capable of doing." And generally, the most important thing is just in there and getting started because once you build up that momentum, it's much easier to continue. But as far as saying, "Exercise is not punishment," you know, that's something I want women to understand. You don't go to the gym because, you know, maybe you got... you gained some extra weight over the years and you've seen how much it's accumulated and you feel guilty and you want to go burn that off. That's not why you work out. You don't go to the gym because you don't like how your body looks, you need to go in there because you want to get stronger; because you want to challenge yourself physically and mentally. And, you know, that's what's going to keep you wanting to return to the gym week after week and month after month. And, you know, more than anything else, it's just about choosing to... to invest in your self-care. And understanding that, it's not just about chasing a goal of, you know, "I'm going to lose this weight so I can finally be happy," it's not about that. It's about understanding a workout can be its own reward. It can be something you do because you're wanting to take care of yourself. And that's something that you get to enjoy every time you go to the gym.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

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Nia Shanks: And it takes time for some women to break out of that mindset. But, you know, always choose to go to the gym for good reasons that make you feel good about yourself, that build you up, because your mindset is a powerful tool and it can either build you up or tear you down. So, you know, that's why I always tell women, "Make sure you're going in there for the right reasons."

Jen Riday: Yeah. I would agree; investing in your self-care. It's funny, when I'm consistent about working out, I've had a few trips where I miss. And when I'm consistent about working out, it's almost like a statement saying, "I do value myself. This act of self-care, this workout is showing I do value myself," and it puts me on the side of the line of taking care of me. And then the confidence and the boost of mood and everything that comes with it, it's just so worth it, like you said.

Nia Shanks: Absolutely.

Jen Riday: Yeah. Well, so let's have a quick break for our sponsor and then we'll come back and talk about some of your favorite things.

Jen Riday: Welcome back. And so, Nia, I want to hear about some of your favorite things, especially your favorite easy meal because you've probably got some good ideas there.

Nia Shanks: I love the slow cooker. (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Oh yeah.

Nia Shanks: Simply because it's so easy; you can just throw everything in there and then it's done. And, you know, that's especially when it comes to feeding ourselves foods we enjoy and that nourishes, I think convenience is so important because that's why so many of us often turn to fast food or, you know, heavily processed foods, because of convenience. And so that's why I like the slow cooker; like, chili is something that's super easy to throw in there.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: Because it's all in one pot and it's done and then you have leftovers, which not everybody loves leftovers; I love them because it's less cooking and less cleaning.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: So Chili's always a good one. (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Yeah, yeah. I'm going to make tonight. As soon as you said slow cooker, my mind went to chili, and then you said chili. Well, so when do you start your crock-pot? Do you just make it a part of your morning routine before heading out for the day or...?

Nia Shanks: The answer is, "It depends." Now, sometimes if it's something that requires prep work like

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some... like I'll make a lot of curries in my slow cooker and sometimes that requires cutting up a lot of vegetables. So what I'll do actually is, a lot of times, the night before, I'll cut up all those vegetables and... and put it on a container. That way, in the morning, the prep work is done and I just toss everything into the slow cooker, turn it on, and it's done.

Jen Riday: Uh-huh.

Nia Shanks: So that's generally what I'll do to cut down. You know, I don't want to wake up earlier than I have to, to put together a crock-pot meal. (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Right, right. What is your favorite way to relax when you're not in the gym or helping others with lifting weights and stuff?

Nia Shanks: I like reading; just relaxing and reading.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah, me too.

Nia Shanks: Walking, I love walking go outside with my dog; fresh air, sunshine, hiking, definitely.

Jen Riday: Cool. And your favorite way to boost your mood if you wake up on the wrong side of the bed?

Nia Shanks: To me, it's... it really is about focusing... and this is... can I jump into my happiness formula? Is that detouring too quickly? (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Oh, no, let's do it! Let's do it. Yeah, let's do it.

Nia Shanks: To me, it's always centering my focus back on the things that are within my control and trying to focus exclusively on that. And, you know, the only things that any of us have control over are our mindset, our thoughts, and then our actions. And so it's... it's really about trying to make sure I stay focused on those things because as long as I do that, as long as I make the most of what I can control, then it's pretty easy to make sure you are happy; you're in a good mood.

Jen Riday: Yeah, that makes sense. And what is your favorite book or books, since you read?

Nia Shanks: Actually right now, anybody who knows Marcus Aurelius and a lot of these quotes, you're probably, hopefully, thinking stoicism. (Laughs)

Jen Riday: Yeah, uh-huh.

Nia Shanks: And so I've been reading a lot of those books; Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus. I'm really enjoying learning the history of stoicism and learning more about things like cognitive behavioral therapy that have their roots and stoicism. So that's what I've been really enjoying reading those books and

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going back through them right now.

Jen Riday: Okay, great! And the best advice you've ever received?

Nia Shanks: You know, I would really have to say it is some of that stoic information because it's something I originally stumbled upon to manage my anxiety. And that's the first thing that's really clicked for me is, understanding that we tend to get frantic about the future, things that haven't even happened yet, we make them worse than they might even ever be, and we let that fear or that anxiety control us.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Nia Shanks: But when we center our focus on what we have the power to control, and that this very moment; you know, that's all we have the power to control is, what we're doing at this second.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Nia Shanks: And try to keep my focus on that and saying, you know, "Given this situation, what is in my control? What isn't?" And I focus exclusively on what I can control and I try to make sure that the actions I take are in line with the things that I say I value.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm! Oh, that's huge! Okay, and let's have a challenge from you to our listeners and then we'll say goodbye.

Nia Shanks: I would encourage any woman to start strength training if she hasn't. And don't necessarily just look at it as a way to get fit and all that stuff, but look at it as a challenge you're choosing to take and to use this time to discover the incredible things that your body can do, instead of just looking at how you can make it look.

Jen Riday: Exactly! I love that. Well, everyone, you'll love this book, 'Lift Like A Girl; Be More, Not Less'. And, Nia, thank you so much for the work you do. I really do think it's true what you said about confidence and weight training being somehow correlated; I love it. So thank you for being on the show.

Nia Shanks: My pleasure, thank you.

Jen Riday: Take care.

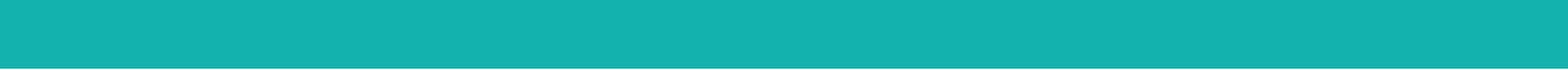
Everyone, go start your strength training program. We want to be strong in body and mind and have that confidence that goes with it. Also, don't forget to fill out your survey for the Vibrant Happy Women podcast; that's at jenriday.com/survey. And by filling it out, you enter yourself to win a \$200 gift card from Amazon. I would love to have your feedback about the show, ideas you have, and just general information so I know who is listening and what your needs might be going forward. Again, that's jenriday.com/survey. Thank you so much for listening today. I will see you later this week with a happy



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bit. And until then, take care.

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