Ignite Your Soul

What is the thing that matters most to you in your life, that feels like it sets the tone for your overall well-being? Is it your relationships? Family members? Finances? Maybe when you think of what matters most, you think of your vocation, your job, your employment. Whatever your answer, there's a profound reality far beneath those surface conditions: What actually determines whether you flourish (or not) in any area of life…is your soul health.

Those are the words found on the opening pages of *Ignite Your Soul: When Exhaustion, Isolation, and Burnout Light a Path to Flourishing* written by Mindy Caliguire, the founder of Soul Care.

As leaders who often drive in the fast lane of life for too long, we short sell the indispensability of a soul that is healthy and whole. This book, filled with reality-checks and insights, will provide a much-needed toolkit for how to be leaders who lead and serve from a full cup. You'll be glad you read it and heeded its message.

Chuck Olson
Founder | Lead With Your Life

Title: Ignite Your Soul: When Exhaustion, Isolation, and Burnout Light a Path to Flourishing

Author: Mindy Caliguire

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Book Description:
Burned out? Exhausted? Feeling isolated and like there's no end in sight? Find hope, direction, and a path to renewed life. *Ignite Your Soul* is a lifeline to help you restore your spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being and navigate the complex landscape of soul care within the communities you live and serve in. Whether you seek refreshment for yourself or those you lead, you'll explore six key practices that lead to whole-self flourishing:

- attention,
- participation,
- delight,
- humility
- silence, and
- rest

In December 2021, Mindy and her husband, Jeff, bore witness to a wildfire's relentless advance on their Colorado property dedicated to spiritual rest and retreat. The devastation of that fire underscored the realization that mirrored the parched reality of many people's souls. So many of us are exhausted and

overwhelmed, and we feel alone, silently struggling with addiction, busyness, distractions, fear, and apathy. *Ignite Your Soul* walks through the journey from pre-burnout to destruction and the path to healings so that you can walk out of your own ashes and into practices like journaling, prayer, and a rule of life and more, to thrive no matter what you face.

Book Quotes:

What is the thing that matters most to you in your life, that feels like it sets the tone for your overall well-being? Is it your relationships? Family members? Finances? Maybe when you think of what matters most, you think of your vocation, your job, your employment. Whatever your answer, there's a profound reality far beneath those surface conditions: What actually determines whether you flourish (or not) in any area of life…is your soul health. LOCATION: 320

This book is an invitation to consider honestly the well-being of your soul, embrace with compassion whatever you find there, and see your burnout and exhaustion as an invitation to meet with God, experience rest, and explore a new path forward. LOCATION: 327

And we must begin with an essential question: What is the state of your soul? LOCATION: 329

When you look at the ecosystem of your soul, do you feel joyful and whole? This thriving soul is in touch with God, connects authentically with others, and engages in meaningful work. There is a capacity for quiet, stillness, and inner peace, no matter the situations life brings. LOCATION: 334

A person with a parched soul goes from burnout to burnout, gradually collapsing emotionally, spiritually, and physically. LOCATION: 338

Here's what I've discovered: We are not thinking about the soul correctly. We assume that the soul is well, as the beloved hymn confirms, because we are saved. But if that's the case, why do so many of us feel like something within us is dying? It's because there's a difference between a soul being saved and a soul being well. LOCATION: 400

Psychē is translated interchangeably as both "soul" and "life" because the biblical concept of the human soul is inextricably woven together with the concept of one's overall "life."…Your soul, your psychē, your life, is everything that makes you you. We find the same concept in the Old Testament with the word nephesh. LOCATION: 429-430

The ancient, biblical concept of the soul is consistent in the Old Testament and the New: The soul represents one's whole person, one's whole life, the entirety of one's existence. It's not an amorphous thing that floats away when we die or that gets flipped on by an inert toggle switch when we first surrender our lives to God. The soul invisibly integrates and holds together all the dimensions of our personhood. LOCATION: 432

Your soul is not simply an inner state of being with a binary status. Saved or unsaved. Lost or found. Heaven-bound or not. My friend the philosopher and scholar Dallas Willard describes the soul with a beautiful metaphor in *Renovation of the Heart:* Our soul is like an inner stream of water, which gives strength, direction, and harmony to every other element of our life. When that stream is as it should be, we are constantly refreshed and exuberant in all we do, because our soul itself is then profusely rooted in the vastness of God and his kingdom, including nature; and all else within us is enlivened and directed by that stream. LOCATION: 435

A dry soul creates a thirst we cannot seem to quench. Only when we care for our souls do we find ourselves in proximity to life-giving water. LOCATION: 486

When we are in great pain and suffering, it's hard to believe there's any way that God could meet us there. But the desert became the place of reconnection that my soul so desperately needed. In the dryness of a desert, I found fresh hope. LOCATION: 536

No one sets out to trash the well-being of their own soul. But it happens through honest, even hardworking and faith-believing, neglect. Soul health, on the other hand, involves purposeful, intentional ways of living connected to the source of life. It's the tree planted by a stream. LOCATION: 696

To assess the current state of your soul, visit soulcare.com/assessment-nav. LOCATION: 714

When devastation sweeps through our personal lives, how often is our first impulse to move on, run away, pretend everything is fine? Something irrevocably awful happens, and we desperately want to remove all traces of that pain. We want to forgive and forget (or maybe just forget). Clear it out and move on to the next thing. Somehow, we think that complete erasure of disappointment or pain or failure will make it seem as though the cause of those emotions had never even happened. We somehow believe that erasing how we feel will lead to peace. LOCATION: 760

So many of our addictions and poor decisions come from a place of not wanting to feel the pain in our lives; instead of letting ourselves feel the heaviness, we eat or shop or watch TV or keep working long into the night. Because we never take the time to sit with our grief, our down-the-road lives pay the price. Grief ignored is a dangerous thing. LOCATION: 775

Life will sometimes be sad, disappointing, even crushing. If we don't sit with our grief long enough, if all we do is bury it or try to clear it away, there are long-term ramifications for our souls. When we avoid our pain, we refuse our souls the needed space to process or metabolize what we are feeling. The wounds we carry fester under the surface and sneak out in irrational fears, avoidant behaviors, and the inability to provide loving and caring space for our children or other loved ones when they invariably encounter loss and pain. LOCATION: 777

Grief ignored is a dangerous thing—but something powerful, even transformative, can happen when we acknowledge our grief. We may even experience healing we couldn't have imagined in the moments when we were suffering the loss. LOCATION: 822

Lewis Smedes, author of *Forgive and Forget and The Art of Forgiving*, is one of the teachers and authors who have helped transform my thinking in this space. He has taught me that we can be honest about our sadness and grief, be transparent about how we have hurt others and been hurt ourselves, and still live with hope and gratitude. He writes, Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. *A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future*. LOCATION: 843

The greater my ability to enter into my grief and sadness, the healthier my soul becomes. If I am unable to consider desolation in my life when it happens and in the days, weeks, and months that follow, the health of my soul will suffer. LOCATION: 853

When drivenness is our primary way of being in the world, there will always be collateral damage. Our neglected and abused bodies and families will begin to fracture, our relationships will shrivel, our organizations will eventually flounder. Our souls will suffer. LOCATION: 923

The point of caring for your soul, of finding a path out of isolation and burnout, is to build a life of deep attentiveness and awareness and openness to the reality of God in and around us at all times. LOCATION: 1013

To build a life of attentiveness and responsiveness to God, you'll need a page, a person, and a plan…The "page" represents the invitation to reflection, usually in the inviting blank pages of a journal. Keeping a journal will help you pay careful attention to your journey. It will slow your mind down to the speed of your handwriting, giving you space to ask yourself and God the deeper questions. LOCATION: 1018-1019

Writing helps us examine the course of our lives—past, present, and future. Like explorers and scientists, we engage in the process of recording observations, reflecting on new understandings, and considering next steps as we face our own uncharted territory of the future. LOCATION: 1030

A journal can be the place where we, like the psalmist, pour out both gratitude and desolation. When we are facing grief, journaling gives us a daily outlet to address the pain in our lives and helps us avoid living in denial. If we don't voice our concerns, we can begin to believe the lies that we will be stuck in these places of desolation, these habits, these addictions, for the rest of our lives. And reflecting on the beautiful and good reminds us that blessings and hardship often coexist, and it's important to pay attention to both. LOCATION: 1044

A leader's capacity for influence is actually capped by their capacity for reflection. If we do not develop our ability to pause, reflect, and consider the bigger picture of our choices, our behavior, and our lives, we lose out on a key dimension of authentic influence. Our leadership will reach a point where it can no longer grow. LOCATION: 1077

One of the biggest surprises in my soul recovery came in the category of "a person." This kind of person is a safe third space—usually someone outside our home and work environments—someone with whom we can process the authentic stuff of life. With this person we form an intentional relationship that helps us pay attention to, and be responsive to, what God is doing in our lives. These relationships have the power to open us up to new levels of healing, of growth, of becoming. LOCATION: 1082

People help us grow. Heal. Become. I wonder how many of us believe this? LOCATION: 1119

In my book *Spiritual Friendship*, I talk about four of the reasons a person is so crucial. Here's a summary: Mirroring. We can't see ourselves. Friends help us see what we can't see about ourselves, and their feedback can help us become who we want and need to be. As you learn more about yourself, perhaps through therapy or coaching or spiritual direction, your friends can help you process these things. Self-disclosure. This is where soul friendship is born. It happens in the beginning, when we talk about who we are, what we love, and where we come from. Friendship then deepens as we talk about our families of origin and our experiences growing up. All this helps move us in the direction of the next step in friendship: confession. Areas of struggle. The ultimate form of self-disclosure is in confession. We all need to be known in our areas of greatest temptation, weakness, and failure. Our friends can stand with us at the edge of the cliff and remind us we don't want to go down there again. Giving and receiving grace. Whenever someone is willing to talk about their history and then move into confessing their temptations, weaknesses, and failures, we are on holy ground. If we can give grace in those moments, friendships move to a deeper level and can become a place where we go to receive the grace we need. LOCATION: 1125

While a page is an invitation to reflection, a person is an invitation to connection. Both increase our capacity to truly attend to, or pay attention to, what matters most. LOCATION: 1138

A rule can provide the same structural support—a rule of life supports our life and growth. Ancient communities began to "wrap" their corporate life with God around a set of practices that provided structure necessary for optimal growth. The oldest living "rule" dates back to the fourth century after the life of Jesus—before megachurches, before the Reformation, even before the Dark Ages. LOCATION: 1154

A trellis is inert: not alive and not the cause of life. But the nature of certain living things is such that they will—by design—wrap themselves around those structures and "climb." And so do we. The human soul will languish on the ground or become haphazard and unfruitful unless it wraps itself around some firm structure—a set of practices that, in and of themselves, do not impart life but which do help the human soul thrive and produce life. LOCATION: 1157

I define a spiritual practice as anything I'm intentional about that helps me carve out the time and space to pay attention to, and be responsive to, the ongoing work of God in my life. LOCATION: 1184

Where our lives go following a crisis of any kind is not a given. Our openness to that unseen realm and our attentiveness to it often depends on the state of our souls, or at least on our willingness to consider what state our souls are in. LOCATION: 1276

I think the life we're invited into, this life of soul care, is very much about becoming hinge-point people, people who can operate even in places of desolation, whether that desolation occurs in our own lives or in the lives of others. We don't completely despair, and we don't run away from sitting with others in that space where they are suffering. Hinge-point people know the gifts available in a Garden of Desolation and what they can bring into our lives. LOCATION: 1283

Becoming and remaining attuned to the interplay between the Not Yet and the Here and Now of the Kingdom requires stepping into a lifestyle of surrender. We take on a yielded way of being. Not only are we not creating our own agendas, we're actually giving up our own agendas, anchoring our confidence in God and not in our own strength. LOCATION: 1340

Soul care cultivates dependence and surrender as a way of life, no matter the circumstance. It's a lifestyle in which we gladly train ourselves to remain fixed on Jesus and take our cues from what is happening in the unseen rather than in the seen. LOCATION: 1347

We get to operate as representatives, agents, messengers, embodied bringers of the unseen life and purposes of God into the realm of the seen. In many ways, that's the most exciting part of living from soul health: being able—truly able—to join in God's activity in and around us! LOCATION: 1368

Neurotheologian Dr. Jim Wilder makes the following observation about joy: From a brain perspective, joy stimulates the growth of the brain systems involved in character formation, identity consolidation, and moral behavior. LOCATION: 1572

The hope of spiritual formation for the Christian is that over time we are being shaped into the likeness and image of Jesus. Anything good that comes from doing any of the practices we've talked about so far is not thanks to our own strength or imagination. If we are taking credit for the good that comes from spiritual practices, we are actually separating ourselves from God instead of growing closer to him and his purposes. That's it. That's the foundation for why we practice things like silent prayer or surrender or solitude. That's why we practice generosity or celebration or Bible study. It's all to become shaped into the likeness and image of Jesus. The practical outworking of a spiritual practice is that it changes what we see—because when we see the right things, really notice them, it changes how we live. This is the promise of spiritual formation. LOCATION: 1613

In his book Hearing God, Dallas Willard endorses a three-part maxim for developing humility: God will gladly give humility to us if, trusting and waiting on him to act, we refrain from pretending we are what we know we are not, from presuming a favorable position for ourselves and from pushing or trying to override the will of others. LOCATION: 1777

God commanded us to rest, and Jesus showed us how it's done. Even the secular world around us is beginning to recognize how integral rest and retreat are to human flourishing. A recent Forbes article lists five benefits that occur when you ensure you are receiving adequate rest: **Physical healing**. The human body flourishes in short bursts of activity, so taking a break, even for a few minutes, can refresh us throughout the day. "Adequate rest helps your body activate its inner healing cascade and return to a state of homeostasis." In other words, resting helps your body make repairs and recover from the hard work you're doing. **Stress reduction**. When you're stressed, you experience a fight-or-flight response, something that may make you feel more productive, at least in the short term. But our bodies were not made to remain in that state. "Resting activates the parasympathetic nervous system—the opposite of the . . . flight-or-fight response." Resting can lower your heart rate and blood pressure, bring your digestive function back to a normal pace, and decrease hormone levels that cause stress. **Boosted creativity**. Resting allows you time to refill your reserves, reflect, and break through creative walls. Open-ended problems become more easily solved because your brain has the space to act spontaneously. **Improved productivity**. Your brain is like most of your other muscles—it is less functional when it's fatigued. Rest sharpens your thinking. **Enhanced decision-making**. Working for too long without resting or a retreat leads to a lower ability to concentrate and depreciated emotional capacity.
LOCATION: 2059-2071

Hear me on this: I'm not saying that soul care is a magic bullet for every struggle you have in life. But soul care does create within us the resiliency and peace to weather the storms.
LOCATION: 2410

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.