

LET'S GET PERSONAL

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# do-over!

HOW WOMEN ARE REINVENTING THEIR LIVES

## CAREER

for working women with ambitions



# WELCOME!

A Career **do-over!** requires that you establish three things: your value, visibility, and confidence. And the greatest of these is confidence.

“You have to decide for yourself what you really want,” says Hearst Magazines president Cathie Black, author of *Basic Black: The Essential Guide for Getting Ahead at Work (and in Life)*. “Walk as if you know where you’re going.”

This workbook has been developed so that you can decide where you’re going and navigate that journey with confidence.

For each essay of the audiobook, there is a page of exercises here to help you personalize the ideas and stories you hear.

At end, you’ll have completed your own reinvention roadmap.

Tell me how it goes! Share your success stories and suggest new exercises. Email me at: [do-over@ann Daly.com](mailto:do-over@ann Daly.com).

# ( 1 ) DREAMS

Dolly Parton attributes her meteoric rise from a dirt-poor childhood to a quarter-billion-dollar show-biz empire to the power of dreaming. “I wake up with new dreams every day,” she says. Your **do-over!** begins with a dream, too. The following exercises are meant to get you dreaming again. Remember, dreams are surreal, fluid, and surprising, so shake out your arms and legs, do a few neck rolls, and *let loose!*

1 ) Cultivate a sense of **wonderment**. Take out your notebook and write this prompt at the top of a fresh page:

*“I wonder . . .”*

Repeatedly complete the sentence until you fill the page. Don’t stop to edit, correct, or second-guess yourself.

2 ) Create your own **holodeck**. Choose an image from a magazine that appeals to you for any reason, or for no apparent reason. Project yourself into the image and play out whatever scenario develops. Who are you? What are you doing? How are you feeling?

3 ) Claim a **talisman**. In the movie “Citizen Kane,” Charles Foster Kane’s last words hark back to the sled that brought him so much childhood joy while his parents were still alive. What’s your “Rosebud”? What object from your past symbolizes a state of being that you long to recapture?

4 ) Play with an **alter ego**. Who’s had more careers than Barbie? To explore another side of yourself, take the online quiz “What’s Your Barbie Doll Personality?” at: [www.barbiecollector.com/collecting/games/personality](http://www.barbiecollector.com/collecting/games/personality).

## ( 2 ) SELF

At the center of your **do-over!** is . . . you. So I have to ask: How prepared are you to get self-centered? In a workplace that still prefers its women to be discreet “team players,” you likely won’t be rewarded for your effort. You may even get pushback for claiming your visibility. These exercises will help you turn the spotlight back on yourself.

- 1 ) Honor your **achievements**. Pretend that you’ve been named “Employee of the Year.” Write an article for the company eletter, detailing your achievements and contributions.
- 2 ) **Listen** to yourself. Schedule 15 minutes alone everyday to do nothing but attune to your body, heart, and mind.
- 3 ) Create your own **mirror**. Whose reflection do you see when you look in the proverbial mirror? Your own, or someone else’s vision of who you are? Buy a dimestore plastic mirror and decorate it with favorite objects, ornaments, color, and fabrics. Include your name. Keep it handy to remind yourself who you really are.
- 4 ) Go on a **date**. With yourself. Once a week, schedule a solo activity of any kind—whether it’s sublime, like an art exhibit, or ridiculous, like the latest chick flick. Make it all about you.

## ( 3 ) STYLE

It's a mistake to think of workplace style as a platform for displaying your fashion knowledge or personal idiosyncrasies. In the public workplace, style is about framing and reinforcing your professional abilities. It's more important to project an aura of authority and confidence than to show off the latest "it" bag. Use your **do-over!** as an opportunity to refresh or re-define your professional style.

1 ) **Inventory** your closet. Schedule a full three hours to go through your entire professional wardrobe, trying on everything, both old and new. For each item, consider how it makes you feel and how it makes you look. Which items resonate with your **do-over!?** How can you build on them?

2 ) Learn from the **pros**. Want to see the ultimate in authority and confidence? Check out evening news anchors Diane Sawyer and Katie Couric.

3 ) Develop a **style sheet**. What is the most important quality that you want to communicate about yourself to your industry—ie., expertise, creativity, leadership, etc.? Take out your notebook and write that word at the top of a fresh page. Fill the entire page with all the ways that you can express this quality in your workplace style. Choose one to start cultivating right away.

4 ) Create a **sample book**. Start putting together a scrapbook of images that embody your ultimate career goal, much like a designer's swatch book. The images can be anything from a magazine ad to an artwork to a color chip. Review it periodically in order to keep honing your **do-over!** style.

## ( 4 ) RESOURCEFULNESS

Rarely does anyone get a job out of the want ads anymore. Whatever the nature of your **do-over!**—new job, promotion, your own business, a career switch—it's up to you to make it happen. Your key resources are intelligence (what you know) and contacts (who you know). Are you working them as diligently and strategically as you can?

- 1 ) Formalize your **database**. Your **do-over!** will be as swift as your contact database is detailed. If you don't already have one, get one started now. If you've got one started, make sure it's up-to-date. Get in the habit of updating it on a weekly basis.
- 2 ) Do your **homework**. Don't assume you know everything that your **do-over!** requires, whether it's training/education, money, space, people, equipment, technology, intelligence, facilities, etc. Look for information from multiple sources, both formal and informal, and make sure to double-confirm that the information is correct.
- 3 ) Choose a **role model**. Use that role model not only for inspiration but also for intelligence. How did she make the transition? If you can, request an informational interview to get more details about how she managed her **do-over!**
- 4 ) Leverage your **network**. That's what your database is for. If you need to learn more about the widget industry, search your database for that person you met last year from Acme Widgets. If you followed up and kept in touch (via live events or online), she'll be happy to help.

## ( 5 ) MEANING

The search for meaning is what makes us human. We need to know that we are not squandering our workday on trivial pursuits. But the search for meaning is not a scavenger hunt. Meaning is not a thing that's out there somewhere waiting for us to find it. We don't *find* meaning; we *make* meaning. It's up to you to choose how and where to professionally invest yourself. That choice is a large part of your career **do-over!**

1 ) **Read** *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl. Schedule all the time you'll need to finish the book at a leisurely pace within one week. Feel free to take notes, highlight, annotate. This is a book you'll want to keep consulting.

2 ) **Make a collage.** Gather together images that somehow represent for you a meaningful work life. Don't over-think the process; rely on your intuition. Once you've assembled the collage, step back to consider the themes you see. Ask a friend to describe the themes she sees. How will these themes inform your **do-over!?**

3 ) Consider **secondary** meaning. Maybe your work is not inherently meaningful. For some women, work is meaningful because it clothes and feeds and educates their children. If that's so, don't set unrealistic expectations for the inherent satisfaction of your work. Instead, remind yourself where the true meaning of your work lies.

4 ) **Write an acceptance speech.** Write an imaginary speech accepting a lifetime achievement award in your field. Explain what the profession has meant to your life.

## ( 6 ) PURPOSE

Purpose is about outcomes and accomplishment. It is public. It says, “You will know I was here because I left behind tangible evidence.” By committing to a purpose, even if we play a small part in a grand-scale effort, we’re assured that we’re making a positive difference in the world. How will your career **do-over!** strengthen your life’s purpose?

- 1 ) Collect some **inspiration**. Start clipping stories about women who have dedicated themselves to a purpose, whether they’ve started a non-profit, or taken on a community cause, or fought for their loved ones. What can you learn from their examples?
- 2 ) Gauge your **passion**. Write a letter-to-the-editor or a blog comment about whatever you feel most passionate about achieving. Afterward, measure the intensity of your experience. Was it strong enough to start up a new organization, switch careers, or volunteer after-hours?
- 3 ) Rewrite your **story**. The grand narrative of a purpose-driven life is the epic quest, as in Homer’s *Odyssey* and the Arthurian legends. How can you recast the story of your career (past, present, and future) as a quest, with you as the questing hero? What are you questing for? What obstacles do you overcome? How? What personal qualities will enable you to succeed?
- 4 ) Create a **tagline**. If you could boil down your professional purpose to a tagline explaining what you’re going to accomplish with your career, what would it be?

## ( 7 ) HABITAT

I remember a world-renowned scholar recalling his childhood years. An intellectual and cosmopolitan gentleman, he had been born on a tobacco farm in Tennessee. As early as three years old, he said, he knew he didn't belong there. As you envision your **do-over!**, pay special attention to where you belong. What is the habitat—the environment and conditions—that will best support you?

- 1 ) **Declutter** your current workspace. By clearing out the junk, you'll be able to accurately assess what you need in a habitat rather than just reacting to chaos.
- 2 ) Write a **want ad**. What kind of fellow creatures will fill out your ideal workplace ecosystem? In your ad, detail the qualities of the ideal colleagues, clients, and supervisors who will nourish your professional growth.
- 3 ) Create a **spec sheet**. What specific conditions (physical, emotional, creative, spiritual, etc.) do you require in a workplace? Write them out in your notebook in list form.
- 4 ) Begin a **daily ritual**. How will you sustain your workplace habitat? Design something simple you can do every day to keep yourself focused on its health and well-being.

## ( 8 ) VALUES

What values will drive your career transition? There are likely a number of values to which you feel committed, but can you identify which one is as essential to you as breathing? The more focused your commitment, the more powerful your **do-over!**

- 1 ) Ask for **360° feedback**. Ask the colleagues and supervisors who know you best to describe, from their point of view, which values are most important to you. Which responses resonate the most?
- 2 ) Choose your **“life words.”** My favorite necklace consists of a long silver chain with three “life words” dangling from the bottom. What three words would you choose for your necklace? (Mine are “clarity,” “curiosity,” and “adventure.”)
- 3 ) Answer the **“Five Why’s.”** For each life word, ask yourself, “Why is that important to my career?” When you have an answer, ask of it again, “Why is that important?” Repeat five times until you get to the very foundation of that value.
- 4 ) Look for a **muse**. What people (ordinary or famous, real or fictional, living or dead) do you admire most? Why? What values do their lives embody? Are those values that you want to adopt?

## ( 9 ) FIT

It takes particular strength and courage to leave a job that doesn't fit, because our culture frowns on so-called "quitters." Remember that old saw? "Quitters never win and winners never quit." Women in particular are expected to stick it out for the greater good. The truth is, the quicker you take a **do-over!** from an ill-fitting job, the better off everyone is.

- 1 ) **Identify** the tug. Spend this week observing what exactly it is about your current work that doesn't fit. Write it down in list form.
- 2 ) **Evaluate** the tug. Go down your list, one item at a time. Ask yourself: Is there a way I can fix this?
- 3 ) **Envision** the perfect fit. Harness the power of imagination. Take five minutes every day to visualize in your mind's eye the work situation that would fit you perfectly. Keep embellishing the image with details. Use this pattern to custom-tailor your career path.
- 4 ) Script the **pushback**. Anticipate and neutralize the pushback you're likely to receive from friends and family if you decide to quit your ill-fitting job. Make a list of all the objections you're likely to hear. Read them all out loud in your most critical voice until they no longer affect you.

## ( 10 ) REFLECTION

I often meet women who long for a career **do-over!** but have no idea what it might look like. I feel their frustration. Alas, I have no silver bullet to offer. If you're stuck wondering what to do next with your career, the only place you'll find the answer is in reflection. Here are a few strategies for cultivating a reflective posture, which means slowing down, idling, and pausing.

- 1 ) Put it in **low gear**. Drive in the slow lane, at or under the speed limit. No passing. Slow down for yellow lights.
- 2 ) Practice **listening**. In your next substantive conversation, be a complete listener. Your only verbal response will be either "Yes" or "Tell me more."
- 3 ) **Uni-task**. Do one thing and only one thing at a time. Period.
- 4 ) Ritualize your **down-time**. Reinvent your own version of mint-juleps-on-the-veranda.

## ( 11 ) CHANGE

In the business world, there's a name for the avid **do-over!** agitator. She's called a "change agent." Take a few pages from the change agent manual, and you can become the change agent of your own career.

- 1) Look for **opportunities**. Don't obsess about the obstacles; focus on the possibilities. Train yourself to be alert to whatever or whoever can help facilitate your **do-over!**
- 2) **Ignore** resisters. Instead of dwelling on the nay-sayers, assemble a group of fellow change agents who can share their experiences and support your progress.
- 3) Keep **inspiring** yourself. Remind yourself as often as possible: what's the payoff?
- 4) Consult the **manual**. To learn more about the tricks of the trade, read Barbara Waugh's *The Soul in the Computer: The Story of a Corporate Revolutionary*.

## ( 12 ) FOCUS

It's so easy to get distracted from the work of a **do-over!** But that's okay, because doubt and resistance are an inevitable part of the process. The important thing is to acknowledge when you have glanced away from your goal. At that moment, language and writing will help re-focus your eyes on the prize.

- 1 ) Change your **language**. Eliminate the word "should" from your vocabulary, both out loud and in your head. Find other words that claim the power of your intentions, like "want" and "will."
- 2 ) Pen the **screenplay**. Spend ten minutes every day writing a description of what you want your career to look and feel like. Try to make the description as vivid as watching a film.
- 3 ) Take time-out to **check-in**. The next time you find yourself in that dark place of self-doubt, take 10 minutes to free-write about this prompt: "What's happening?"
- 4 ) Design your own **freewriting prompt**. What is the one question you're most afraid to ask and answer?

## ( 13 ) LEGACY

When we were children, we asked for permission from our parents and teachers. As adults, we must give ourselves permission to take a **do-over!** Sometimes that's harder than it sounds.

1) Make a **shrine**. In the past, what key people have given you literal or symbolic permission to follow your professional passion? Keep that spirit alive by putting together a shrine filled with their keepsakes and mementos.

2) Write it in **six words**. In six words, describe the legacy you want to leave to the world with your work. Then use those six words as your mantra.

3) Assemble a **playlist**. What songs inspire you to get up and claim your **do-over!?** Make them into a playlist, so you can call up that power wherever and whenever you need a boost.

4) **Confront** the hesitations. Complete this sentence as many times as possible as quickly as possible: "It's okay for me to [your desired action], because \_\_\_\_\_."