

LET'S GET PERSONAL

ANN
DALY
PhD
do-over!
HOW WOMEN ARE REINVENTING THEIR LIVES

PRIME TIME

for women over 50
who know the best is yet to come



WELCOME!

No one dares call us “middle-aged” anymore. Marketing guru Marti Barletta calls us “PrimeTime Women™.” According to her research, 59% of women ages 50–70 feel that their greatest achievements are still ahead of them.

I bet you’re part of that 59%.

There are two things you have going for you as you pursue your Prime Time **do-over!** First, you have liberated yourself from the “disease to please.” You’re pretty clear: it was a false promise, that if you were a good girl and sacrificed to the greater good, you would secure your own success and happiness. Second, you have accumulated enough experience to be confident not just about your ability to make good choices but, more importantly, about your ability to make the inevitable course corrections.

This workbook has been developed so that you can customize your own **do-over!**

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 tips and tools. Email me at: do-over@ann Daly.com.

(1) DREAMS

Your **do-over!** begins with a dream. More precisely, it begins with the act of dreaming. How long has it been since you were “caught” day-dreaming? The following exercises are meant to get you dreaming again, because dreams are the stuff your **do-over!** is made of. Remember, dreams are surreal, fluid, and surprising, so shake out your arms and legs, do a few neck rolls, and *let loose!*

1) Play with an **alter ego**. Barbie has turned 50! And who’s had more **do-overs!** 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.

2) 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?

3) 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?

4) Recapture your 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) SELF

At the center of your **do-over!** is . . . you. I know you're ready (finally) to put yourself first, but what I want to know is: How prepared are you to *enjoy* being self-centered? If nothing else, a **do-over!** is about fun. Just in case you're hanging on to a bit of good-girl guilt, these exercises will help you remember that sometimes girls just wanna have fun.

1) 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 dime-store plastic mirror and decorate it with favorite objects, ornaments, color, and fabrics. Include your name. Keep it handy to remind yourself how fun and beautiful you really are.

2) 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. Your mission: make it fun!

3) Summon up your **past** selves. Gather up all the photos you have of yourself and choose your favorites. Write a caption for each one describing what's wonderful and fun about the woman in the picture.

4) Join **Facebook**. If you haven't already, start a Facebook page. It's an easy way to get addicted to talking about yourself!

(3) STYLE

Thankfully, the fashion police loses jurisdiction as we gain years and confidence. Style replaces “fashion.” Self-expression replaces “what not to wear.” Your personal style shows the world what you’ve got going on. Don’t overlook the pleasure and power of designing a distinctive personal image for your **do-over!**

1) Learn from the **pros**. Check out the food/lifestyle shows. Each one is built around the host’s unique way-of-being. You’d never mistake down-home Paula Deen for gal-pal Rachel Ray or gracious Martha Stewart. If you had your own TV show, what would you be known for/as?

2) Brainstorm your **options**. What is the most important quality you want to communicate about yourself to the world? Take out your notebook and write that word at the top of a fresh page. Fill the entire page with all the ways, both sublime and ridiculous, that you can express this quality in your personal style. Choose three to start cultivating right away.

3) **Purge** your closet. Schedule a half-day to go through the entire thing, trying on everything, both old and new. For each item, consider whether it is part of your past or part of your future. Pitch or save accordingly.

4) Create a **sample book**. Start putting together a scrap-book of images that appeal to your sense of style, much like a designer’s swatch book. The images can be anything from a fashion ad to a color chip to a postcard. Review it periodically in order to keep honing your **do-over!**

(4) RESOURCEFULNESS

Do-overs! can be tricky to choreograph, especially when you've already put a life in place. Changing the rules this late in the game requires imagination and persistence. Most of all, it requires resourcefulness—working with what you have and figuring out how to arrange for the rest of what you need.

- 1) Choose a **role model**. Use that role model not only for inspiration but also for information. How did she make the transition? If you can, request an informational interview to get more details about how she managed her **do-over!**
- 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, facilities, etc. Look for information from multiple sources, both formal and informal, and make sure to double-confirm that the information is correct.
- 3) Write the **recipe**. Pull together all your research and write it up in the form of a recipe. List the ingredients and then detail the step-by-step process. How much of what ingredients put together in what order in what way will achieve your delectable **do-over!?**
- 4) Make it a **scavenger hunt**. Create a checklist of the resources you still need. Brainstorm all the possible ways you can beg, borrow, or barter them from friends, family, and colleagues and *their* friends, family, and colleagues.

(5) MEANING

At mid-life, the search for meaning becomes paramount. We need to know that we are not squandering what's left of our life 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. And we make meaning when we choose how and where to invest ourselves. That choice constitutes the better part of your **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) Take the **essay** exam (but no one's grading you). Frankl argues that besides making meaning through love, art, nature, and achievement, meaning can also be made by how we choose to deal with the cards we're dealt. As you move forward with your **do-over!**, how will you make meaning (and peace) out of the less desirable cards that you may have been dealt?
- 3) Take the two-week **challenge**. Want to learn more about what's really meaningful to you? Consider every request you receive with this single criterion: If it's not a resounding "YES," it's a "no."
- 4) Write your **epitaph**. What few sentences would you inscribe on your tombstone to describe the meaning of 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. A clear purpose will turbo-charge your **do-over!**

- 1) Collect some fresh **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, volunteer your time, or make a donation?
- 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 your life’s story (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 purpose to a tagline explaining what you’re going to accomplish with your life, 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. But for others of us it's not an early aha! moment but a lifelong inquiry. 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 habitat. *The Clutter Diet* by Lorie Morrero is a wonderful guide. This will serve as your “spring cleanup” before seeding your **do-over!**
- 2) Write a **want ad**. What kind of fellow creatures will fill out your ecosystem? In your ad, detail the qualities of the kind of person who will nourish your growth.
- 3) Create a **spec sheet**. What specific conditions (physical, emotional, creative, spiritual, etc.) will you require? Write them out in your notebook in list form.
- 4) Begin a **daily ritual**. How will you sustain your habitat? Design something simple you can do every day to keep you focused on its health and well-being.

(8) VALUES

What values will drive your transition? There are likely a number of values to which you have felt commitment during your life, but can you identify which one is as essential to you as breathing? And which one that most inspires you today? The more focused your commitment, the more powerful your **do-over!**

- 1) Ask for **360° feedback**. Ask the people who know you best to describe, from their point of view, which values are most important to you. Make sure to get a well-rounded sampling of respondents involved in all aspects of your family, work, and community activities.
- 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?” 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 **role models**. 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 situation 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. Lucky for us, it's never too late to take a **do-over!** from a wrong fit.

- 1) Do a light **pruning**. At this point in life, we've inevitably outgrown what did fit once-upon-a-time. Pruning may seem extreme, but it's the best way to encourage new growth.
- 2) **Role play**. Anticipate and neutralize the pushback you're likely to receive when you prune. 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.
- 3) Take a **needs assessment**. As you move ahead with your **do-over!**, take time to understand what you need from any given situation—say, the personality traits of a new friend or the workload of a new volunteer activity.
- 4) Don't go cold turkey; wear the **patch**. People generally prefer the devil they know. If you're fearful about leaving what's familiar for what's unknown, then wean yourself one step at a time. Skip one committee meeting or turn down one invitation. Instead, invest that energy and time into something that brings you joy. Joy will eventually overtake fear.

(10) REFLECTION

I often meet women who long for a **do-over!** but have no idea what it will look like. After decades spent nurturing a family or pursuing a career or committing to a cause, they are at a loss to reimagine a different way-of-being. I feel their frustration and disappointment. I have no silver bullet to offer, but I can say that, if you're feeling stuck, 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) Drop into **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!** practitioner. She's called a "change agent." As the change agent of your own life, you can learn how to avoid either over-planning or under-managing the transition.

1) Learn from a **good book**. Learn from the best change agents by reading their biographies and autobiographies. Among my favorites: Blanche Wiesen Cook's multi-volume biography of Eleanor Roosevelt and *Personal History*, Katharine Graham's autobiography.

2) Learn from your **body**. Start a physical practice that is calming and centering. Yoga, walking, gardening, and knitting are all good ones to consider. A centered body will help you avoid making extreme decisions and taking extreme actions.

3) Learn from **collective wisdom**. Assemble a group of fellow change agents who can share their experiences and support your progress.

4) Learn from **paying attention**. Do nothing for 15 minutes a day. Use that time to "take the temperature" of your change process.

(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) Roll the **camera**. Spend ten minutes every day writing a description of what your dream will 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

Alfred, Lord Tennyson said it best: “Death closes all: but something ere the end,/ Some work of noble note, may yet be done.” Is there any “work of noble note” you have left to do? Your **do-over!** may mean a new career, continued education, giving back, a new lifestyle, a creative practice. Just remember, a legacy isn’t restricted to what you do. It’s also about who you are.

- 1) Pay it **forward**. Is there someone whose legacy enabled you to live your best life, as my mother did for me? How might you pass along that gift?
- 2) Write it in **six words**. In six words, write down the legacy you want to leave to the world. Inscribe those six words somewhere you can see them throughout the day.
- 3) Assemble a **playlist**. What songs inspire you to take up your “work of noble note”? Make them into a playlist, so you can call up that power wherever and whenever you feel the need.
- 4) What would **Jane** do? Ask yourself the question that prompted solitary researcher Jane Goodall to reinvent herself as a global activist in her 50s: “What am I going to do with the rest of this extraordinary life?”