

## HOW TO GET FOCUSED ON YOUR CAREER

Executive Coach Ann Daly PhD Debuts Column for The Glass Hammer

AUSTIN, TEXAS, August 11, 2010 -- "There's no way around it. Career advancement requires strategy. But today's 'on-demand' workplace conspires against that kind of personal long-term perspective. It's a challenge these days for anyone to look away from the current client crisis or the next project deadline to focus on her own future," says executive coach Ann Daly PhD. "But look away we must."

In her debut "Ask-the-Career-Coach" column for The Glass Hammer, Dr. Daly offers professional women advice on how to get focused on career strategy. The Glass Hammer (<http://budurl.com/77d9>) is an online community designed for women executives.

For women who are serious about giving their career the sustained attention it requires, Dr. Daly advises using these three strategies for developing the habit of deep focus:

First, **give up the myth of multitasking**. It's not a productivity tool. It's an excuse for perpetual distraction. Our brain does not conduct its activities simultaneously. It works sequentially. When we think we're multitasking, we're actually zigzagging and backtracking between different tasks. This constant "switching," it turns out, is terribly inefficient and even detrimental to higher-level activities such as strategic thinking. Your career strategy isn't going to appear in the cracks between phone calls and text messages.

Second, **write it down**. Writing-and I mean *handwriting*-is a form of thinking, and it is a highly effective way to shut out the noise and slow down the rat race. There's something about the physicality of the moving hand and the pressure on paper that helps us drop down into a kind of concentrated state that's conducive to complexity and ambiguity. Keep a career strategy notebook where you regularly go to review goals, record research, document experiences, play out scenarios, draft plans, reflect on results, and make revisions. The act of writing will clarify intentions and invite fresh ideas.

Third, **train your attention**. Attention is the earnest direction of your mind. It is, metaphorically speaking, how and when you "turn" your mind. In general, we are too adept at alerting, too timid at orienting, and too remote from the executive network. It's very easy to squander our most precious commodity, our "undivided attention." Think of your attentional training as pilates for the brain. Your goals are to:

- filter out more stimuli
- respond more selectively
- spend more time in big-picture thinking

Dr. Daly tells her readers: "Once you get in the habit of focusing on your future, you'll be able to take more control of your career. Chances are, you won't be the one in the office who gets blindsided, left out, or passed over."

**ANN DALY PhD** (<http://www.anndaly.com>) is an expert on women's changing lives. Before reinventing herself as an executive coach, she was a journalist and then a women's studies professor at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Daly is the award-winning author of six books, including [Do-Over! How Women Are Reinventing Their Lives](#). She has been featured on Oprah & Friends' "Peter Walsh Show," ForbesWoman, WomenEntrepreneur and in *Houston Woman* magazine. She is a blogger for the Huffington Post and a career columnist for The Glass Hammer. [Click here for Dr. Daly's media page](#).

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