

MEDIA RELEASE
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HOW TO COACH EXEC WOMEN

5 fundamentals for sending women up the corporate ladder

AUSTIN, TEXAS, April 14, 2011 --"Men and women are not different," says Ann Daly PhD, specialist in coaching executive women. "Our **expectations** of men and women are different."

And it's those expectations that create the context (eg, the "[unwritten rules](#)"), she says, for women in the workforce. "We can't coach women to fulfill their potential and their ambition unless we understand that it's still not a level playing field out there. We live in a culture where power still defaults to the men in the room--it's subtle, but true."

When McKinsey & Company's Joanna Barsh talked to the *Wall Street Journal* about the new report she co-authored on [women in the US economy](#), she [recommended coaching](#) as a strategy to help women move up out of middle management, where so many women get stuck.

Dr. Daly says that Barsh, a director in McKinsey's New York office, rightly turns our attention from top-down corporate initiatives to the kind of on-the-ground professional development that individual women can achieve when they work with a personal coach.

Dr. Daly explains the five fundamentals of coaching executive women:

1. Actually, it IS personal.

It's not women who were traditionally defined as the family "breadwinner." Therefore, work has not been prescribed for them as "bringing home the bacon." Work isn't just a function or a game for them; it's a meaningful expression of a life, a self. That connection needs to be taken into account during any significant career development process.

2. Beware perfectionism.

Someone once asked me in a Q-and-A session about holding my clients accountable. I had to laugh. I have the opposite challenge. Women, positioned as "the other" (as in "women are different" and "the opposite sex"), are more highly and routinely scrutinized. They have a much narrower margin for error. The result: a drive to perfectionism. I don't need to hold my clients' feet to the fire; I need to help them let go of a debilitating defense mechanism.

3. A little goes a long way.

No need to use a sledgehammer. Women are pretty open to acknowledging what's going on and their contribution to it. Especially when they understand that they and their behaviors are enmeshed in a larger system. For example, why don't women "ask for it"? It's not because they are shy, or weak, or unequipped--although that's what women are told. It's because they're smart. They know that there is a price to pay for being an assertive woman. Learning how to negotiate that double-bind with both a sense of power and calculated risk is a game-changer.

4. Ambivalence does not equal resistance.

Coaches are always on the lookout for points of resistance, because they are powerful levers of change. Without the burden of having to be dominant and declaratory, women have the luxury to consider and reconsider. This apparent ambivalence must not be mistaken as resistance. It's simply good sense.

5. It's still a man's world.

Enough said.

Dr. Daly is available for media commentary on this and other women-related topics. To schedule an interview, contact Ann Daly at: 512/454-0531 or media@anndaly.com.

ANN DALY PhD (<http://www.anndaly.com>) is a feminist commentator on women's changing lives. A former professor at The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Daly specializes in executive coaching and professional development for women. She 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," *Family Circle* magazine, ForbesWoman.com, WomenEntrepreneur.com, MariaShriver.com, and More.com. She is the career coaching columnist for TheGlassHammer.com and writes the "4G Feminism" blog for The Huffington Post. [Click here for Dr. Daly's media kit.](#)