

[Become a Coach and Mentor](#)

Make a great living helping others. ICF Accredited Coach Certification.
www.CoachTrainingAlliance.com

[Arise - Be Your Own Boss](#)

Work from home. Be your own boss! As seen on Good Morning America.
Arise.com/Tech_Jobs

[BIO JOBS](#)

Work at Pfizer to improve health and well-being around the world.
www.PfizerVaccines.com

Volume 76, Number 50 | May 9 -15, 2007



Marcia Ciriello

Writer/poker player/"slash" lifestyle advocate Marci Alboher

A cure for multiple interest disorder

Villager Marci Alboher blends work and life seamlessly


By Pamela Ryckman

Marci Alboher never thought her poker habit would help her freelance writing career. But when she couldn't find a way to connect with an older editor, poker proved the solution. The editor learned Alboher was an avid player and invited her to join the regular game he played with other journalists. Five years later, Alboher is running that game, which she often hosts at her Downing Street apartment. "I'm not a gambler in other ways, but poker is the new gold in terms of networking," she says. "You forge bonds, like on a golf course, and it serves a woman well because it's primarily men who play."

In her new book, "One Person/Multiple Careers: A New Model for Work/Life Success" (Warner Business Books), Marci Alboher advocates this type of work/life blending to achieve both personal satisfaction and professional success. To build relationships and create opportunities, Alboher counsels readers to allow their passions to seep into the workplace. Or better yet, to live the "slash" lifestyle.

Alboher defines "slashing" as cultivating multiple careers and identities simultaneously. This can mean assuming complementary roles, like the popular CNN medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta, whose first and ongoing livelihood as a neurosurgeon provided the platform for his television work. Or it can mean attempting something seemingly unrelated, like a French horn player who sells real estate, or a veteran money manager who plunged into documentary filmmaking at age 48 (both are featured in her book). The "slash effect" is a movement of people who think of their careers as a

Reader Services

 thevillager.com

Search

[Email our editor](#)

[View our previous issues](#)

[Report Distribution Problems](#)

integrate the two. "I was presenting different personas — a straight-laced corporate self, then the more free-wheeling character outside the office — and feeling inauthentic about it," she says. Becoming a writer allowed Alboher the freedom and creativity she craved, but she didn't simply abandon her legal career. Instead, she used her education and experience as a springboard to write about workplace issues; her legal background provided instant credibility with a thriving network of sources. Alboher has just begun to write a weekly online career column called "Shifting Careers" for the New York Times. "I don't believe a windy career is a mistake, and most often detours come back and make sense at some point," she says.

According to Alboher, "slashing" not only combats burnout, but also provides job security. Companies no longer offer guarantees and even strong performers get laid off. As linear career paths become increasingly rare, it behooves even top talent at stable firms to cultivate marketable skills that fall outside the realm of their occupations.

Still, Alboher concedes that it can be a challenge to "slash" in New York. Here, it's primarily entrepreneurs, artists, consultants, and freelancers who can split their time between multiple pursuits. "It's very hard to 'slash' in a career where you work more than 60 hours a week, and nine to five is half-time by New York standards," Alboher laughs. If you want to "slash," it's essential to find a supportive employer, but developments in telecommuting, flex-time policies and adult education are making side-ventures increasingly easy. "It's not easy, but more people are letting who they are define what they do," Alboher says. Even die-hard New Yorkers are abandoning our cult of the "all-the-time" workplace.

And Alboher insists that if you're doing something you love, you're bound to see an overlap between work and personal life. For her, they flow seamlessly together. In addition to playing poker, Alboher spends much of her free time going to literary events or taking long walks with writer friends, and is able to exchange ideas in the process. "It helps to let an activity play double-duty, to find something that qualifies as leisure but also give you a professional edge," she says.

It seems fitting, then, for Alboher to conduct an interview in her living room on her 41st birthday. The word "authentic" comes up again when describing her home, a nineteenth-century stable converted into apartments, including the ground-floor duplex Alboher shares with her partner, Jay. Together, they stripped an interior wall to expose the building's original brick; they wanted to keep the building true to its roots.

It turns out Alboher isn't the only "slash" in the house. Jay worked in politics and as a sports agent before starting a men's gift business, Bergino.com, known for its hand-made baseballs. Jay's business exposed him to product design and retail environments, and when the couple moved into their Downing Street apartment, he found himself drawn to interior design as well.

"The months we spent renovating and furnishing our place felt very natural to me," says Jay. "And with all Marci's talk about cultivating slashes, I decided to make some changes to my business to dedicate time to this new passion. We joke that Marci has become my personal slash coach."

With its mix of streamlined modern furniture and bold colors, and creative space-saving techniques, their home bears witness to his current foray into home decor.

"We're living in a lab. It's an experiment," says Alboher. "Jay calls this the fun house." And it seems like an apt metaphor for their life.
