

Beth Phillips

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Make Everything Count!

Beth's life is full with professional, family, and personal responsibilities, which she manages by staying organized and passionate about the pharmacy profession.

Beth is currently Rite Aid Professor, Clinical and Administrative Pharmacy, University of Georgia, College of Pharmacy. Beth received her PharmD (1994) at the University of Kansas and completed a pharmacy practice residency at the University of Illinois, Chicago and her ambulatory care specialty residency at the VA Medical Center, Iowa City, Iowa.

Beth's advice is: As you navigate your career, make everything count, pursue your passions and take advantage of opportunities, balance your work and personal lives, and stay organized to meet your professional and personal goals.

Dear Colleague,

People often ask me, "How do you do it?" What they are really asking is how someone balances her responsibilities at work and at home. As I reflect on my career, I realize I have my own story of successes and challenges. What I share is my story; I hope that pieces of it are inspiring and useful in your own career and quest for balance.

Organization is one of my keys to success. It helps me to explain larger ideas or tackle challenges after summarizing the main steps in the



path to success or to the solution. To that end, here is a list of what I consider to be the fundamental elements to my success: (1) make everything count, (2) pursue your passions, (3) maintain balance, and (4) stay organized.

Make Everything Count

One of the strategies that I live by in my professional life and gives me balance in my personal life is to make everything count. To me, this means that all of my professional pursuits and opportunities align with my job responsibilities and expectations. As a clinical faculty member, I wear many hats: clinical pharmacist, teacher, and preceptor to students and residents, residency director, researcher, editor, and let's not forget about actively participating in the profession! Trying to devote my best efforts to all of these areas can be challenging. With my daily responsibilities, projects, scholarship, and professional organization involvement, I am always looking for ways to re-tool my work and use it for another purpose. For example, clinical controversies in patient care become topics for research projects, presentations, or review articles. The work dedicated to these efforts in turn enhances the care I provide to patients, and creates good teaching points for students and residents. The professional activities also filter down to patient care and teaching. When I work on a big project, I always find multiple uses for the knowledge gained or work spent by pursuing a professional presentation or peer-reviewed publication. Knowing my professional goals helps me determine what opportunities I should pursue and which ones are not the best fit. It also helps to maintain balance in my personal life because I know which opportunities do not align with my career goals and/or job responsibilities.

Pursue Your Passions

Another guiding principle is to pursue my passions. I am grateful to work in a profession I love that has so many opportunities to get involved and give back. However, it can be difficult to choose or say “no” when presented with these opportunities. For me, I feel deeply committed to residency training. I always said “yes” to anything residency-related. Over time, colleagues recognized this and more opportunities followed.

After completing my two years of residency, I was excited to start my first “real” position in the profession. The pharmacist role in ambulatory care was not as robust and widespread as it is today, so we had to establish pharmacists as essential members of the healthcare team. I practiced in primary care and specialty clinics in an academic medical center, where my co-pharmacist and I worked diligently to develop services that would eventually become known