Planning For Career Satisfaction & Success

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My Career Path

- Three different jobs
  - Faculty, UNC-CH (1994 – 2007)
  - Director, NIH OITE (2007 – present)
- All using similar skills, but to varying degrees and in very different ways
  - Analytical and problem-solving
  - Interpersonal
  - Communication
- Each transition was difficult in the same ways
  - Was I certain I wanted the job?
  - Could I let go of what I already had?
  - Was I “good enough” to get the job, keep the job, and thrive in the job?
First Principles of Science Careers

- When it comes to choosing a career, one size does not fit all
- You have many options in all employment sectors
- You will likely have multiple career transitions
- You will get a job based on your research accomplishments AND your broader skill set
- Job searches are about transitions and transitions are stressful
- Mentors make a big difference, but research mentors are not always the best career mentors
- Understanding the process is the first step to success
Elements of A Job Search

1. Job Placement
2. Job Searching
3. Gain Credentials
   - Try it ‘on’
4. Knowing Self
5. Knowing Options
Elements of A Successful Career

- New Position
- Promotion
- New Job Search
- Modify Responsibilities
- Take on New Roles
- Knowing Self
- Knowing Opportunities
Options Knowledge Means Understanding:

- The responsibilities and duties of an occupation or position
  - Specific job demands and responsibilities
  - Unspoken “rules of the trade”
- Salary, typical benefits, perks, and advancement opportunities
- Down-sides, risks, and typical de-railers
- The qualifications and experiences needed to get the job
Major Categories of STEM Careers

- Health care delivery and management
- Research and development
- Technology development
- Administration
- Education
- Policy
- Business
- Writing
- Law
- Consulting
Gaining Options Knowledge

- Passive approaches
  - Read books, blogs and websites
  - Attend career workshops and panel discussions

- A more active approach
  - Network and do informational interviews
Informational Interviews

- A unique form of networking designed to collect information about a job, career field, industry, or company
- Useful before and during career transitions

https://www.training.nih.gov/assets/Informational_Interviews.pdf

https://oitecareersblog.wordpress.com/?s=informational+interview
What To Explore on Informational Interviews

- What the job is really like
- Critical skills for success
  - To get a job
  - To succeed in it
- Career trajectories
- Advice on how you should move forward
  - Other useful contacts
  - thoughts on coursework and academic needs
  - feedback on your experiences, CV or resume
  - professional societies you might explore
  - insights into possible positions
Finding People To Talk With

- Alumni databases
- The network of your teachers and mentors
- Attend career panels
- Join appropriate professional societies
- E-networking sites (especially Linked-In)
- Personal networks
The Nitty Gritty

- Use all of your networks to find people for informational interviews
- Easiest to make your request by email
- Can meet in person or by phone
- Be flexible regarding when you meet
- Bring a current CV or resume
- Plan for no more than 30 minutes
- Open conversation with:
  - Brief explanation of why you requested the meeting
  - Summary of your experiences to date
Dear Dr. Milgram:

Dr. XXXX suggested I contact you because of your experience in science education at NIH and in an academic setting. I am a fellow here at NIH and I am very interested in transitioning from my current position to one where I can use my communication and organizational skills to enhance science education at the undergraduate or graduate level. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you briefly to discuss your thoughts on how I might make this career transition. I am especially interested in your views regarding some potential volunteer experiences and differences you see in your staff who work with undergraduate vs. graduate students. I can meet at your convenience and greatly appreciate your time.

Sincerely,
For You To Consider

- What types of networking and informational interviews should I be doing now?

- What do I need to do to prepare for these informational interviews?

- Who can I reach out to for support and guidance during the process?
Self Knowledge Means Knowing:

- Interests within the field
- Personality and learning style
- Highly developed, developing, and under-developed skills
- Work preferences (work values)
- Management and leadership style (and capacity)
- Credentials
- Personal and geographic restrictions
Gaining Self Knowledge

- You may get some insights from books and workshops, but...

- Generally, this is an active process requiring you to look deeply at yourself

- Helpful to have guidance and support from career mentors and/or (career) counselors
Start By Answering These Two Questions

- In my job, I want [to] _________________ every day.
- And I do NOT want [to do] a lot of ________________.
Defining Your Skills

- From two perspectives
  - Developing or highly developed skills
  - Weaker skills that need your attention
- In sufficient depth to be useful
- With examples to back it up
- And formal recognition that confirms it (= credentials)
More on Skills

- Can be learned and enhanced
  - But best to identify and exploit natural talents
- Important to define skills as specifically as possible
  - For career exploration and for your job search
- For career transitions, it is often important to examine your transferrable skills
  - Skills you have acquired during any activity in your life that are applicable to what you want to do in your next job
  - Any activity means at home, in the community or at work
Skills You May Have

- Technical
- Analytical
- Learning
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Teaching
- Mentoring
- Project management
- Budget management
- Self management
- People management
- Leadership
Parsing Your Skills

“I have excellent communication skills”:

- Can explain complex concepts to lay audiences
- Best when speaking to an expert audiences
- Have an engaging public speaking style
- Can coherently organize material for others
- Can facilitate discussions, even heated ones
- Can influence individuals or groups
- Can think quickly on my feet when answering questions
- I easily connect with and engage students in the classroom
- Can write for a deadline
- Can edit the work of others
- Can write for lay audiences better than expert audiences
- Excellent at writing highly detailed methods-based document
Talking About Your Skills

- Use SAR Technique
  - Situation
  - Action
  - Result
- Quantify things
- Make it relevant to the situation
- No bragging but don’t be too modest either
Group Work

- Share one of your highly developed (developing) skills with a neighbor
- Share why you feel this is a strength and what outside input you have that confirms this assessment for you
- Was this hard to do? Easy to do? Why?
Final Skills Exercise

- A skill I need to continue to develop is _____________.
- I am going to work on this by _________________.


Knowing What You Need

- More personal, often ignored, and subject to a variety of cultural, personal, and family influences
- Mismatch between needs and actual job is often a source of job dissatisfaction and stress
Exercise

- Answer the following question:
  I am interested in a job that has/includes ........

- Look at how many job requirements you have and work to identify which are MOST IMPORTANT to you

  Identify your TOP THREE job requirements
We All Have Different Needs

| 1. Frequent dealings with the public | 1. Friendships and warm working relationships | 1. Using cutting edge or pioneering technologies |
| 2. Variety and a changing work pace | 2. Flexibility in work schedule and structure | 2. Making decisions, having power to decide courses of action |
| 3. Opportunity for global perspectives and international work | 3. Opportunity for significant teaching and mentoring | 3. Variety and a changing work pace |
| 4. Substantial teamwork and group interaction | 4. Stability and predictability in my job | 4. High degree of intensity and competition |
There are Big Consequences for Ignoring This Self-Reflection

- The 90,000+ hours rule
- You can NOT get this from the web, from reading a book, or by asking others
- Provides some rationale for exploring some jobs over others, but this is not proscriptive
  - Although our work needs are generally stable in the short-term, they can change substantially over time
  - Some of us struggle with the idea that our needs matter
Interests

- What do we think about when we think about work?
  - Our science, in great detail and from many perspectives
  - Problems and broad areas of science/healthcare
  - Technologies, procedures and approaches
  - Communicating outcomes and results
  - People as individuals
  - Teams, groups and management

- If we never think about work, what do we think about?
  - A sign that it may be time for a change
  - Important to consider what to move toward

- Sometimes, our hobbies and outside interests help inform our career decisions and sometimes not
Elements of Career Planning

Know Self

Know Options

Try it on
Gain credentials
Prepare materials

Job search

Job
Addressing Your Needs & Interests

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<th>MY NEEDS &amp; INTERESTS</th>
<th>NEEDS &amp; INTERESTS JOB BRINGS</th>
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Comparing Your Skills to the Job

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<tr>
<th>MY HIGHLY DEVELOPED SKILLS</th>
<th>SKILLS NEEDED FOR _______________ POSITION</th>
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- Then ask:
  - Where is there overlap?
  - Is there enough overlap to begin searching?
  - Where am I lacking important skills?
  - What can I do about skills I am lacking?
Getting the Experiences You Need

- Start early and start general; increase your focus as you settle on a plan
- Use an Individual Development Plan to track your progress
- Find and engage career mentors
- Look for opportunities on your campus, in the surrounding community and in professional societies
- Take evening/on-line courses if necessary
- Be prepared for resistance from your thesis or postdoc supervisors so you can deal with it
Getting Buy-In

- If you don’t ask …..
- But go prepared….
- Get advice in advance……
- Be prepared to compromise…..
- And be creative working around any road-blocks
Some Fundamental Truths

- Job searches are about transitions and transitions are always difficult
  - We have to let go
  - We have to deal with a lot of uncertainty
  - We face the discomfort of deeply examining ourselves
  - We face the discomfort of being examined by others

- In addition to managing the job search we have to manage the emotions and doubts that go along with it
Some Themes

- It helps to cultivate an optimistic approach
- You will need to know how to ‘bounce back’ (be resilient)
- We can be our own worst enemy (negative head-tapes; feeling like an imposter)
Optimism vs. Pessimism

- Optimists tend to see the positive side of situations and expect things to turn out well.
- Pessimists tend to see the negative side of situations and expect things to turn out poorly.
- Individuals who have worked to develop an appropriate level of optimism, often...
  - See opportunities where others see problems.
  - See each event as a “one off” without getting lost in long-term negative interpretations.
  - Find explanations that allow them to move on – not just pollyanna happy thoughts, but observations that help modulate the intensity of the negative emotions.
How You View Negative Events

- Permanence
  - How long you think it will last how often you think it occurs

- Pervasiveness
  - How widespread you think the is

- Personalization
  - Do you focus on internal or external attribution; do you tend to see problems as about you, about someone else, circumstances out of your control, or a combination of factors?

Martin Seligman Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life; and visit http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/publications.htm
Resilience

- The capacity to rise above adversity and forge lasting strengths in the struggle. At the heart of resiliency is a belief in oneself, a belief that bad times are temporary, and an ability to grow from failure.

- Can be cultivated in many ways, but especially by focusing on maintaining relationships and on self-care.

- Helpful to remember the strengths you have:

http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/design-your-path/201305/10-traits-emotionally-resilient-people

http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/design-your-path/201305/25-ways-boost-resilience
Resiliency Exercise

- What do I do for self-care? What I am not doing that I should be doing?
- What are some of my “go to’s” when the going gets tough? What sustains me and allows me to keep going?

- Short talk on resiliency and the job search: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmiBWkqFDe0
Feeling Like an Imposter

- When successful individuals believe that even though they are successful, their accomplishments are the result of luck or external circumstance.

- Three basic signs:
  - If you tend to feel/think that you fooled other people into over-estimating your ability.
  - If you have a tendency to attribute success to other factors and not your intelligence or ability.
  - If you often fear being exposed as a fraud.

- See [http://paulineroseclance.com/](http://paulineroseclance.com/) to learn more.
To Have A Successful Career, You Need To:

- Define and hone your skills (so you can use them to shine)
- Know your liabilities (so you can improve them or work around them)
- Know what is important to you (so you can put that first)
- Develop your emotional intelligence
- Learn how to deal with set-back and disappointment
- Identify and come to terms with limitations and constraints
- Develop networks in ways that matter
- Develop relationships with advocates and mentors who will promote and support you
- Begin early and use all of the resources available to you
Make a Plan TODAY!

- Use SMART goal strategies
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Relevant
  - Timely

- Consider sections on
  - Specific skills development
  - Obtaining credentials
  - Exploring careers/educational opportunities
  - Readying job search documents
  - Dealing with personal/psychosocial issues
Keep In Touch
(www.training.nih.gov)

- Connect with me on Linked-In (no Facebook please)
- Join the NIH Intramural Science Linked-In group
- Attend OITE career workshops by video
- Visit the OITE You Tube channel
- Read the OITE Careers blog
- Email me anytime at milgrams@od.nih.gov