Planning and Spontaneity: finding your balance for career and life satisfaction.

Dan Hahn
Department of Entomology and Nematology
University of Florida
2015 Office Of Postdoctoral Affairs Orientation
Planning vs. Spontaneity
My Trajectory

1974-1992 Grew up near Ft. Lauderdale

1992-1996 BS Florida State

1996-2003 PhD U. Arizona

2003-2004 Postdoc Ohio State

2005-Pres Faculty UF

Trust Me, I’m a Doctor
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Love, marriage, waiting for spouse, extended PhD to write grants – Spontaneity that led to Planning
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9 Postdocs – 3 current, 4 tenure-track jobs, 1 Marie-Curie Fellow, 1 unemployed

6 Grad Students – 2 current, 2 in PhD programs, 1 government sci, 1 industry sci.

27 undergrads! 2 visiting scientists.
The Tenure-Track Trap
PhD – a thing certifying you can think

Postdoc – a great time to explore what YOU want out of your career!
It was the best of times...postdoc can be great!

Shed student distractions for full focus on scholarship

Technical Competence

Asked to review others work
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.
It was the best of times, and the worst of times

Postdoc can be a great time, but also stressful.

"Just work till midnight, you need to relax too"

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Had own grant

Job in 7 months
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“So, what is the point of this?”

GREAT, KID

DON'T GET COCKY

SHIFT HAPPENS
How to make the best out of your postdoc...

The Individual Development Plan

...for mapping your academic and professional development

Work with your mentor on an IDP that you both can agree on and that meets both of your goals.
What is an IDP?

- A written plan that outlines what career goals you want to accomplish and what steps you can take to meet those goals.
- A tool you can use to identify, organize and plan your career.
- A tool for creating a personalized plan that best reflects your career aspirations, whether you want to plan for professional development, promotional opportunities or retirement in the next few years.
Introducing myIDP: A career plan customized for you, by you.

- The first and only online app that helps scientists prepare their very own individual development plan.
- Recommended by leading professional societies and the NIH.
- Developed by scientists at FASEB, UCSF, and the Medical College of Wisconsin in collaboration with AAAS and Science Careers, with support from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

Visit the website and start planning today!
myIDP.sciencecareers.org
Make an IDP

• Work through it by yourself and be reflective

• Personality is critical – your personality is important in determining your career success and life satisfaction.
Get to Know Yourself

• Get to know yourself – many ways including personality tests (Myers & Briggs 16 personalities, Ritberger 4 colors, etc.)

• Pay attention to your own habits, likes & dislikes, are your career goals in line?
Make an IDP

- Work through it by yourself and be reflective

- Share it with your mentor and help them to be reflective based on your personality & goals

- Share it with others and get their insights too – share it with your community!
Building Community

• Work with people in your group, but also get out and find others across campus.

• UF is a big place with many folks spread out amongst colleges and departments, get out and look for people with like interests

• Also, attend events that are not directly related to your work - spontaneity!
Our Lab Research Program

Planning

- Project 1 - NSF
- Project 2 - NSF

Spontaneity

- Project 3 - USDA
- Project 4 - USDA

-- Engineer spontaneous opportunities
-- Go to events that seem only tangentially related
-- Speak to folks you might not normally speak with
-- Pitch your research and see if it excites them
Communication is Key!

• You have to sell your work – know your target audience

• You need a short, punchy soundbyte – TV like

• Written work should read easy & satisfy both specialists & non-specialists – newspaper like
Develop your Professionalism

• Establish yourself as an expert in an area – do solid work and know your field!

• Convince others of your expertise – show others that you are capable and have mature skills.

• Use local, regional, national, and international opportunities to sell yourself – practice local

• Help others to sell you.
Knowing yourself can make you work better with others

• You must manage yourself, but also learn more about managing others.

• Take opportunities to mentor junior students; grad, undergrad, high school

• Take time to listen to those folks you are mentoring/managing – knowing them and their personality will help.
Management – mentoring and management

• Manage down, but also manage up!

• Get to know your advisor’s personality!

• Help to manage their efforts on your behalf.
Living up to Mentors Expectations

• Do solid work – you were brought in with a goal in mind, make something happen

• Keep the big picture in mind, but offer something special in your focus area.

• Have more than one idea/approach, but not so many you can’t deliver.

• Promise vs. delivery – **Individual Development Plan** – work for advisor, they work for you.

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*busy is a drug that a lot of people are addicted to.*

- Rob Bell
Closing Remarks

• Know yourself, but take time to know others too

• Have a clear plan, share it, and co-develop it

• Be open to spontaneity and new opportunities
Thanks to Postdocs!