Graduate Research Symposium

Launching Yourself
And
Living Happily Ever After

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Creating your very own personalized road map

One size definitely does not fit all!
List all the things you hope to accomplish in your lifetime

• Take a tablet and pen and head to your favorite blue sky thinking place
• Make an exhaustive list
• Put it aside for a few days
• Pull it out and review it
• Add items
• Clarify items
• REPEAT PROCESS 3-4 TIMES; THEN ANNUALLY
List Seem Overwhelming?

It should. You have the rest of your life to accomplish it.

Heaven forbid you should run out of goals by age 33!
Getting your list into manageable condition

Pick out some categories for your goals.
Possible goal categories to consider

- Spiritual
- Physical, Health, Fitness
- Personal
- Financial
- Professional
- Academic
- Family
- Community Service
Sort your goals into the various categories

• Assign each goal to a category
• Perhaps use an Excel spreadsheet?
Check each your goal clustering

• All goals included?
• Are any goals missing in the category?
• Is each goal still clear?
• Are any goals duplicative?
Rank order each goal in each category

- Rank each goal’s importance within the category
- Focus on first item in each category
- Goal #1 is your most important goal
- If this is the only goal you achieve, will you be satisfied?
Get an approximation of where you’re headed

- Time for another exhaustive list
- Write the characteristics of you in relation to each of your categories: job, work, family, etc.
- Return to it every time you consider a life decision
What might a job list include?

- Flexible work hours + + + ++
- Ethnical work environment + + + + +
- Not tied to an office + +
- Having a nice office 0
- Low stress job 0
- Clear career ladder  + + +
- On-job learning + + + +
- Sufficient compensation + + +
Next blue sky assignment: Describe yourself

How will you be described in 25 years?
How will you be described by...

- Your spouse/partner
- Your children
- Your extended family
- Your colleagues
- Your community
- Your acquaintances
- Your subordinates
Am I trying to confuse you further? Not at all!

• Just take your blinders off to consider the many options that are now open to you

• Virtually no decision will be wrong as long as you go forward and don’t stall.
Next steps to achieving your #1 goals in each category

• What must you accomplish in next 5 years?
  Example of your #1 goals:
  – Find a post-doc position
  – Get some work experience?
  – Gain job option insights
  – Start my family
What must you accomplish in the next 12 months to achieve your five year goals on schedule?

- Bring up my GPA
- Ace my courses
- Get letters of reference
- Write personal statement for post-doc app
- Find a life partner
What must you accomplish in the next quarter to achieve your five year goals on schedule?

• Approach referees and draft letters
• Sign up for graduate level cram course
• Meet people with common interest so we can study together and have some fun
What must you accomplish in the next month to achieve your five year goals on schedule?

• Identify first referee and approach him
• Develop list of personnel statement points
• Ace my mid-terms
• Ask friends for an introduction to potential life partners
What must you accomplish in the next week to achieve your five year goals on schedule?

- Draft 5 points for personal statement
- Get phone number of referee and make call
- Call three friends to arrange meetings with other singles
What must you accomplish today to achieve your five year goals on schedule?

• Call professor for reference
• Get missing class notes
• Review 50 pages of your toughest course
• See your OB/GYN for annual and family planning
The key is

• Have three items on your “today” list
• These are the items that move you ahead
• Accomplish them as early in the day as possible
• Make an appointment with them to allow sufficient time and then double the time needed
• Devote the rest of the day to keeping on schedule
Launching your plan

- Use an appointment book with lots of space to write notes to yourself
- Allow time to strategize:
  - morning to review and follow your plan
  - noon to review your progress and make mid-course corrections
  - evening to plan the next day’s three item attack plan
You’ll need execution time

• Put your top three tasks on your calendar
• Don’t do anything else until you accomplish your top three tasks
• There are exceptions - a potential referee doesn’t come to the office until 3 pm
• Treat these items with the same respect you would treat an appointment with me
You’ll need a weekly planning appointment with yourself

- Set a specific time; honor it
- Key others in your life? Include time for reviewing your plans together with them
- Ask for support achieving your goals
- Offer support to others for achieving their goals
Weekly planning session

• Review your progress
• Adjust your goals?
• Missed accomplishing any goals?
• Move missed goals to next week
• What other goals can you add to your upcoming week’s goals?
Have a bad week coming up?

• Select 3 mindless goals each day
• Or make your 3 daily goals related to maintaining your ground for the week
• What can you can skip? Do halfway?
• Consider calling in some favors to get through the week
• Learn how to say “NO” nicely
The big picture

• You are a whole person
• You have many categories to consider
• You may elect to do all eight at once or defer some
• Defer travel goals? Defer family goals? Defer community service goals?
Getting it all together & balancing the load with grace

• The more successfully you accomplish your basic life goals, the more you will be asked to do
• If you plan, you will clearly see your time limits
• Stick to your planning process
• Involve the other significant people in your life
• Get your kids started early
You are tomorrow’s best and brightest

• Having the tools to help get you there will make the road ahead less bumpy and more fulfilling
Remember!

- 90% of successful people have written life goals
- Accomplish three key goals every day
- Review and adjust your life goals as needed.
Congratulations on being so good!

It’s up to you to make your dreams come true!!!