Twitter Thread by Jaimie Gradus



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I've put together my list of top 10 tips for early career researchers and I'm going to share it here as promised. But first a disclaimer...I don't know everything. This list is based on my experience in academia. I would love for others to add and augment. With that in mind....■

1: Decide what you want your LIFE to be. This career could consume you completely if you let it, but it won't always love you. Focus on the other things in your life that bring you joy and fulfillment and cultivate those just as much as you cultivate your research career.

2: Decide what you want your CAREER to be. What are your values? What are you in this for? There will be hard times. But knowing your values and what success means to you can help guide you through them.

3: Decide whose opinions really matter to you. Mastery requires feedback and you will get a lot of it, some useful some less so. Identify the small circle of people you can really trust to give it to you straight. This includes forming a no committee.

4: People are people are people. Don't be afraid to email someone about a postdoc or job or grant idea. We've all been there. Some people are not generous people. This is good information to have. Move on to other colleagues and mentors if you encounter these people.

5: Stay curious. Ask questions of everyone. I always attributed my career success to luck but then I read a book that said what people call luck is actually curiosity. Be curious about new methods, other content areas, the logistics of funding, etc. Info will make this easier.

6: Embrace vulnerability. You're going to have set backs and let downs in this career. Everyone does. View it as a chance to learn (stay curious) and improve. Remember to talk to yourself like you'd talk to a friend and that comparison is the thief of joy.

7: Speaking of joy...it's a vulnerable emotion. We often allow for only a little joy before we start to worry about negative "what if's" as a defense mechanism. It's very easy to fall into that trap in this career. I know I do. Stay present in times when things are ok. Enjoy it.

8: Use time efficiently - it’s a finite resource. When it’s time to work, work. Really sit down and work. When it’s time off, be off. Recharge. It will make you more motivated to work during work time.

9: Focus on writing. Picture grant funding as an assembly line you have to rev up. You have to put a lot out there initially to get this line rolling. It gets a little easier once it’s up and running but the start up takes a lot of effort.

10: There is no finish line. We focus on goals for so long in academia (get into grad school, defend, postdoc, job) but at some point there are none left and the end goal of this career is what you want. Remember, what are YOUR values?

I hope this is helpful to whoever needs to hear it and I’d also love to see additions to this.