

NIDDK New Investigators Workshop
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“Maintaining Your Personal and Professional Lives”

Allan Walker, M.D.

Boston, MA



Harvard
Medical School



Massachusetts
General Hospital

Personal and Professional Lives

General

“bottom line” - you can have a personal life and still pursue an academic/research career

how is this done?

Personal and Professional Lives

The Problem

- need to get NIH/foundation support to continue career
- have just established a strong personal relationship which may lead to marriage/partnership
- just married and want to start a family

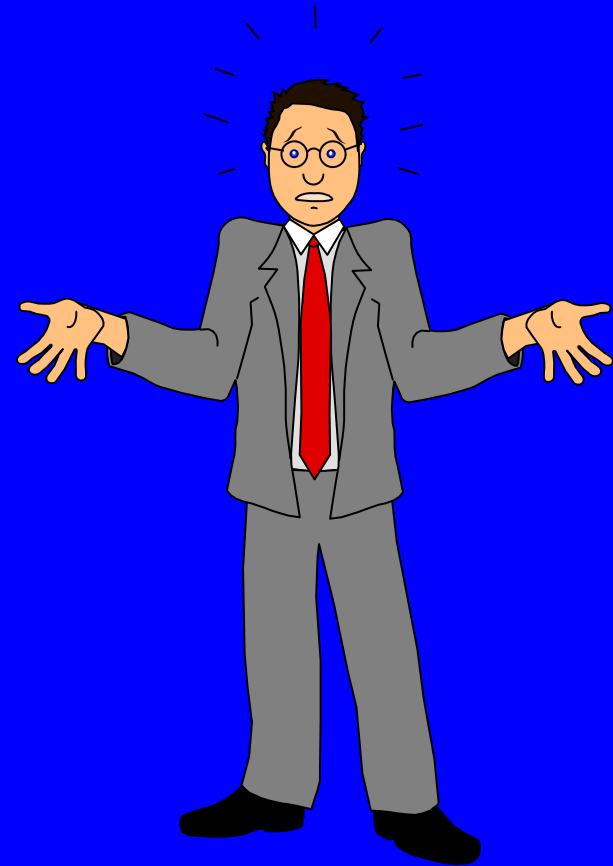
Personal and Professional Lives

The Problem (cont'd)

- “my spouse wants a home and stable personal life - can I afford the *house payments*”?
- “I can’t continue to work the long hours that a laboratory/research career demands”

What provides career satisfaction?

- Pursuing “something” that you value and are passionate about.
 - Where you work shares that “something” value
 - Perception of autonomy to pursue value
- D. Heath, Fulfilling Lives, 1991



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Approach to Solution - “plan ahead”

- try to “think through” what your goals are for professional and personal life at outset of postdoctoral/subspecialty fellowship

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Approach to Solution (cont'd)

- chose postdoctoral/subspecialty fellowship wisely
 - need a sympathetic mentor
 - need strong research environment, e.g., atmosphere that supports your research goals
 - establish project that can lead to independence - e.g., preliminary data/publications

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Approach to Solution (cont'd)

- plan grant/fellowship support to adequately cover personal needs
 - K award
 - early application for R-21 or R-03 (technical support)
 - foundation support/institutional support (negotiated upfront)
 - don't “moonlight” too much - bad for professional and personal lives

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Approach to Solution (cont'd)

- approach to personal life
 - plan ahead to allow time for personal life (organized)
 - professional vs. personal life is not an “all or none” situation - should be able to find “middle ground”
 - there is a “life” after children grow-up

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Approach to Solutions (cont'd)

- don't shortchange family/relationships (personal needs should be part of professional life)
- find way to release "stress" (e.g., exercise, music, reading novels, etc.)

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Approach to Solutions (cont'd)

- may need to modify professional goals to satisfy personal needs, e.g., option for part-time academic service at HMS
- may have to modify professional demands, e.g., decrease clinical load to increase research and personal time

Personal and Professional Lives

Summary & Conclusions

- you have trained too long in preparation for a profession in research - “don’t abandon it”
- if you plan to have family and relationships, need to devote sufficient time to fulfill obligations
- if you plan ahead, usually a “middle ground” solution can be negotiated