Transitioning Successfully From Postdoc To Faculty

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Lots To Keep Track Of

- Setting research goals
- Setting clinical goals
- Setting teaching goals
- Setting up your lab/office
- Finding staff
- Getting funded
- Publishing your work
- University service
- Broader scientific service
- Campus relationships
- Science relationships
- Personal relationships

To Hit the Ground Running:

- Take care of your personal life
- Establish first-year goals as soon as possible
- Set up & stock your lab
- Set up your office and computer
- Make a plan for hiring staff and/or recruitiing students
- Integrate you & your group into department/university life
- Plan lectures & classes
- Plan & begin writing grants
- Plan for clinic or service responsibilities

Your Lab Space

- Expect 600 - 1000 square ft; may or may not be renovated
- Choice may include "open lab" or more traditional space
- You typically need to find space for each lab member, their desk, common equipment & storage
- Configurations include individual-based, assay-based, or a hybrid approach
- Put your lab bench/work space in a central spot
- If possible, keep your office close-by

Considerations When Purchasing Major Equipment

- Do you really need one of your own?
- Will the equipment be a lab mainstay?
- How long you will use it?
- Is the technology changing?
- Do you need all the bells & whistles?
- Is local service available?
- Can you afford it?
- Do you have room for it?

Considerations When Stocking A Wet Lab

- Survey your current work environment
- Consider your immediate research plans
- Learn about local purchasing rules & regulations
- Make sure you have appropriate storage in place
- Find vendors with new-lab "specials"

Some Things That Are Often Over-looked:

- IACUC and IRB approvals
- Required training courses & paperwork
- Advanced planning for housing animals
- Organizational systems for your research group
- Establishing relationships with core facility managers

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Things You Need to Be Successful

- Feedback relevant to your research projects
- Feedback relevant to your teaching and/or clinical responsibilities
- Access to professional development opportunities
- Sense of community and personal support
- Access to appropriate networks, on- and off-campus

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Teaching

- Learn about on-campus resources
- Talk with other faculty about the types of students you will be teaching
- Attend classes given by known "master" teachers
- Find master teachers to observe you and provide feedback
- Collect syllabi and materials from previous lecturers
- Begin compiling your teaching portfolio from the outset

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Tenure

- Be sure you have a clear understanding of what is expected and what goes into a tenure package
  - Ask to see examples
  - Carefully read all university guidelines
  - Understand your rights regarding slowing the tenure clock
- Talk with your chair within the first 3 months to begin an on-going dialogue
- When talking with mentors and considering options "talk to tenure"

Relationship Management

- Identify key players, potential mentors, and advocates
  - Your department or center chair/chairs
  - Senior leadership in the department, Dean's office, university, etc
  - Junior faculty who remember what you are going through
  - Graduate and training grant program leadership
  - Faculty in your field – on and off campus
  - Faculty in courses you will teach in or want to teach in
- Establish regular meetings with key players and supporters
  - Regular will vary depending on the individual and the nature of the relationship
- Attend seminars and social functions
- Realize you will get overwhelmed with information early-on so plan accordingly

Time Management

- Find resources now if this tends to be a sticking point
- Be pragmatic and plan wisely – it is easy to get overwhelmed with requests
- Engage your chair and mentors in helping you choose when to say "yes" and when to say "no"
- Understand "The only" factor
- Balance pragmatic decision-making with attention to your passions
- Ask yourself – can this wait a year?, two years? Until I have tenure? Until…..?

Some Common Themes

- Learn the "rules" - spoken and unspoken
- Talk to experts
- You need mentors and advocates; find them on- and off-campus
- Collect necessary information before deciding
- Deadlines matter
- There is no such thing as a free lunch
- Learning to say "NO" is a critical skill to develop early
- We all make mistakes – turn them into learning opportunities

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Leadership

"Although you've been hired for your scientific skills and research potential, **your eventual success will depend heavily on your ability to guide, lead, & empower others to do their best work.**"

Dr. Tom Cech, HHMI

Leaders Who Succeed:

- Create high morale, pride and spirit within their team
- Ensure that resources are available & remove barriers that hinder the team's effectiveness
- Adapt & develop during transitions - help employees do the same

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Leadership Involves:

- Understanding yourself
- Understanding your employees and trainees
- Developing outstanding communication skills
- Developing and using your emotional intelligence

Important Questions

- What is it we are trying to accomplish?
- What is our shared vision for how we should work together?
- How will we work together to build and maintain team morale?
- How will we work cooperatively to resolve conflicts and deal with issues that come up?

Why We Run Into Problems

- Expectation mismatch
- Differences in personalities, work styles & temperaments
- Discomfort relating to personal differences
- Competition for resources - including time

Supervisors & Mentors

- Supervisor
  - someone who directs the work of another
  - a supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone does their job

- Mentor
  - someone who passes on skills, knowledge, and wisdom to another person
  - a mentor works to help develop someone's career

Supervision *vs.* mentoring

	Supervising	Mentoring
Focus of learning	Needs of the organization/group	Needs of the mentee
Style of help	Directive *"I tell - you do"*	Collaborative *"We talk - you do"*
Balance of power	In the control of the supervisor	More equal and fluid

Masterful Mentoring, 2005

## Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory

- Suggests that successful leaders adjust their styles depending on the situation
  - No one style is inherently better; they all have their time and place and should be used as appropriate
- Characterizes leadership style in terms of the amount of direction and support that the leader provides to their followers
  - four styles based on the relative emphasis on <u>directive</u> *vs.* <u>supportive</u> behaviors
  - The key issue in adjusting your leadership style is <u>follower maturity</u>

Two Types of Behaviors

- Directive behaviors (task focused)
  - Involves clearly telling people what to do, how to do it, when to do it and then closely monitoring behavior
- Supportive behaviors (relationship focused)
  - Involves listening to people, providing support for their efforts, and then facilitating their involvement in problem-solving and decision making

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Hersey-Blanchard Leadership Model

	High	
Supportive behaviors (focus on relationship)	**Participating** *Share ideas*	**Selling** *Explain decisions*
	Delegating *Turn over decisions*	**Telling** *Give instructions*
		High →

Directive behaviors
(focus on task)

Impact of Ability and Confidence

Participating *Share ideas* (Followers able, not confident)	**Selling** *Explain decisions* (Followers unable, confident)
Delegating *Turn over decisions* (Followers able and confident)	**Telling** *Give instructions* (Followers unable, not confident)

Supportive behaviors (focus on relationship) — High

Directive behaviors (focus on task) — High
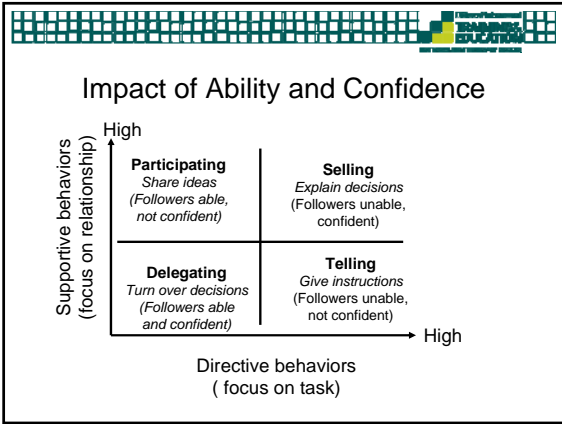
Can A Supervisor Also Be A Mentor?

- Yes
- No
- Yes, but……
  - There can be a substantial amount of tension between these two roles

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Causes of Role Tension

- Student may not feel safe disclosing to "their boss"
- Your needs are not the same as your students' needs
- Time constraints may limit quality of mentoring interactions
- Lack (or perceived lack) of expertise and experience in specific areas relevant to the student

Some General Strategies (I)

- Think about your own experiences
  - Identify best practices
  - Avoid mimicry of worst practices
- Find a "mentoring mentor" and other ways to keep growing
  - Workshops, courses, and on-line information
  - Leadership journal
- Develop a framework for dissecting specific situations
  - List: my needs - his/her needs
  - Consider: long- and short-term impacts of your decisions
  - List: deadlines and factors impacting my decision that need to be communicated to the fellow
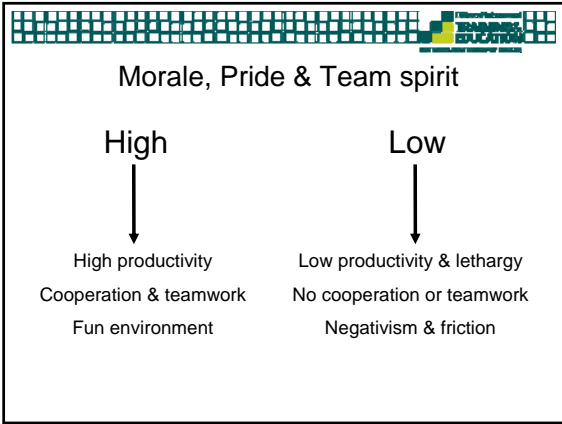 - Meet and talk about it

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Some General Strategies (II)

- Encourage members of your research group to find additional mentors; facilitate this process if necessary
- Know about training resources on your campus; anticipate needs and direct fellows to these resources early
- Discuss goals and progress - early and often
  - Science, career, [and personal]
  - Formally - using an IDP
  - Informally - suited to your style and your fellow's style

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Communication Within Your Team

- Informal interactions fostered by time in the lab/group office, walk-bys, an open-door policy, & social interactions
- Weekly group meeting
- One-on-one meetings with team members
- Small group meetings/project meetings
- Strategy sessions
- Performance reviews & progress reports

Morale, Pride & Team spirit

High	Low
↓	↓
High productivity	Low productivity & lethargy
Cooperation & teamwork	No cooperation or teamwork
Fun environment	Negativism & friction

Ways to Build & Maintain Morale

- Show genuine concern & interest in people; interact with them in a variety of ways
- Develop group traditions
- Be a "real person"
- Develop your sense of humor
- Be open, honest, & self-disclosing
- Be passionate about your work
- Be visible & available for the team - lead by example
- Try not to be be aloof, arrogant, impatient, overly critical
- Share credit, both privately & in public ways
- Take responsibility for getting the team back on track when necessary

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Giving Feedback

- Allows you to deal with issues and shore up weaknesses
- Helps students and staff build on their strengths
- Accelerates learning in all environments
- Can also be in the form of a tangible reward
- May start out informally, but eventually needs to become more formal if there are substantial issues
- Must be within institutional and program norms

Feedback Should Be:

- Often
- Timely
- Focused on skills relevant to your mission
- NOT just a "pat on the back"

SBI Feedback:

- Describe the **SITUATION** in which you observed the employee
- Describe the **BEHAVIOR** you observed
- Describe the **IMPACT** of that behavior on you and others present in that situation

REMEMBER: It is not only what you say, but how you say it

* From the Center for Creative Leadership

Things to Avoid:

- Public Spaces
- Phrases like "always" & "never"
- Vague phrases that don't focus on a specific behavior
- Exaggerated statements about the behavior's impact
- Interpreting the behavior
- Exploring reasons for the behavior
- Speaking for others
- Good-bad-good sandwiches
- Going on for too long
- Implied threats
- Using sarcastic humor in place of feedback
- Phrasing feedback as a question, not a statement

Final reflections

- Even with the best intentions, we can not be the "best" leader all of the time for all of our team.
- Apologies & effort go a long way, but only if we are honestly making the effort.
- We all have our weak spots; figure out what "gets your goat" & work on dealing with these issues more calmly
- View each "failure" as an opportunity to learn for the next time; find a "mentoring mentor" & talk it out.

Resources

- www.hhmi.org/labmanagement for *Making the Right Moves*
- BWF book, *Staffing the Lab*
- Books available in the OITE Career Library including *Entering Mentoring, At the Helm, Motherhood: The Elephant in the Laboratory, Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment, Academic Scientists at Work, etc*
- A variety of websites including the OITE, your IC Training Office, the NPA, Science Careers, Naturejobs Careers, The Chronicle of Higher Education, newfacultysuccess.com
- Email me (milgrams@od.nih.gov) if you wish to take part in a new faculty brown-bag

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Staffing Your Research Group

Consider:

- What you can afford
- Stability of your funding
- Progress of your research
- How much time you have to train & mentor new employees
- Quality and quantity of graduate students
- Presence of strong undergraduate research programs

Checking A Reference

- Best done by phone
- First describe the job & work environment
- Ask short, open-ended questions
  - Why is she leaving your lab?
  - Is he reliable? Why do you say that?
  - Will she go the extra mile at crunch time?
  - Would you rehire?
  - Can you describe strengths & weaknesses?
- Probe for further information by asking for examples

Issues To Address During the Interview

- Experience & skills
- Commitment and initiative
- Working & learning styles
- Time management skills
- Decision making & problem solving skills
- Interpersonal skills