



5 COMMON MISTAKES IN PhD RESEARCH

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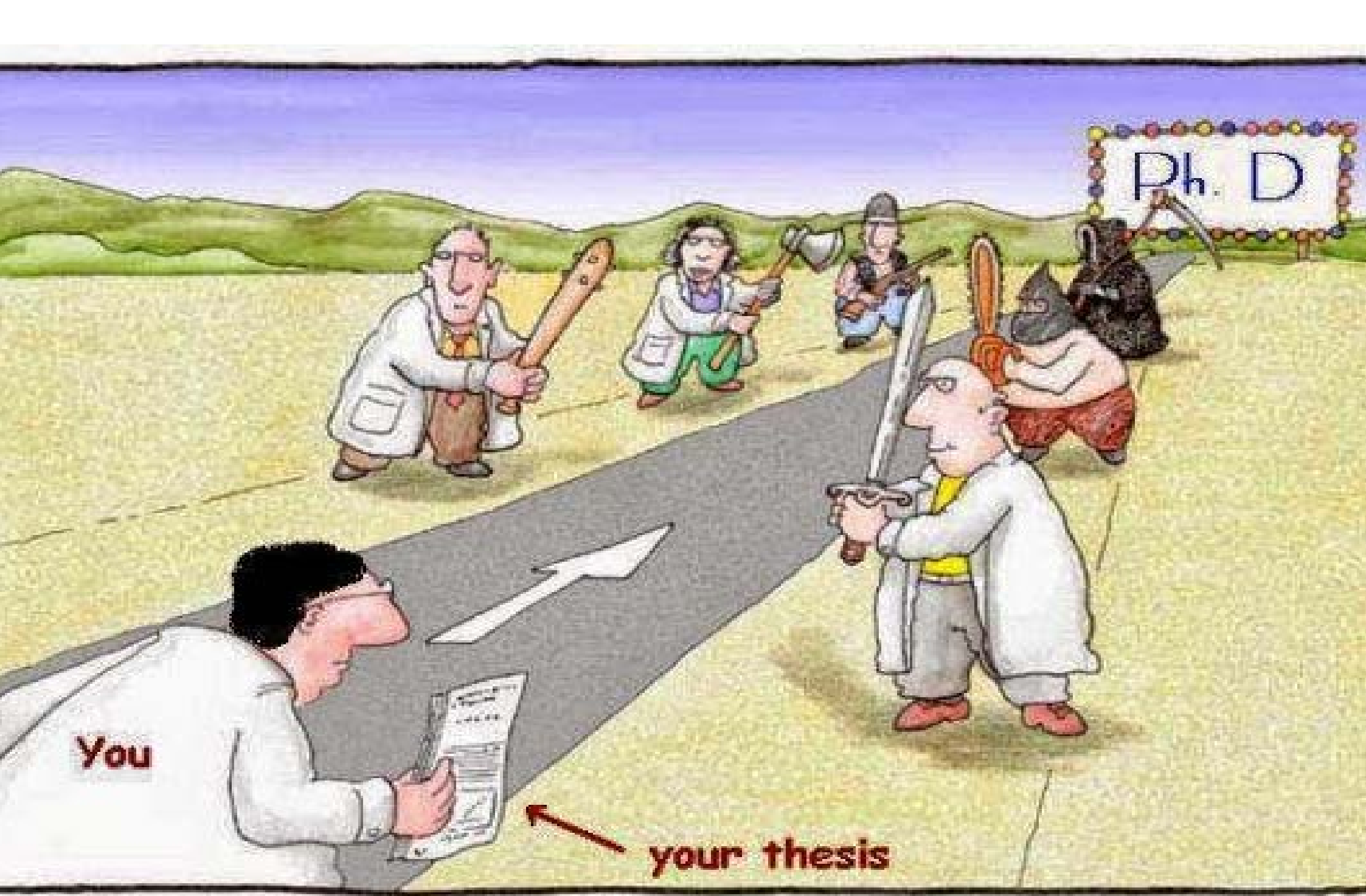
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T. RAMAYAH

academician & researcher

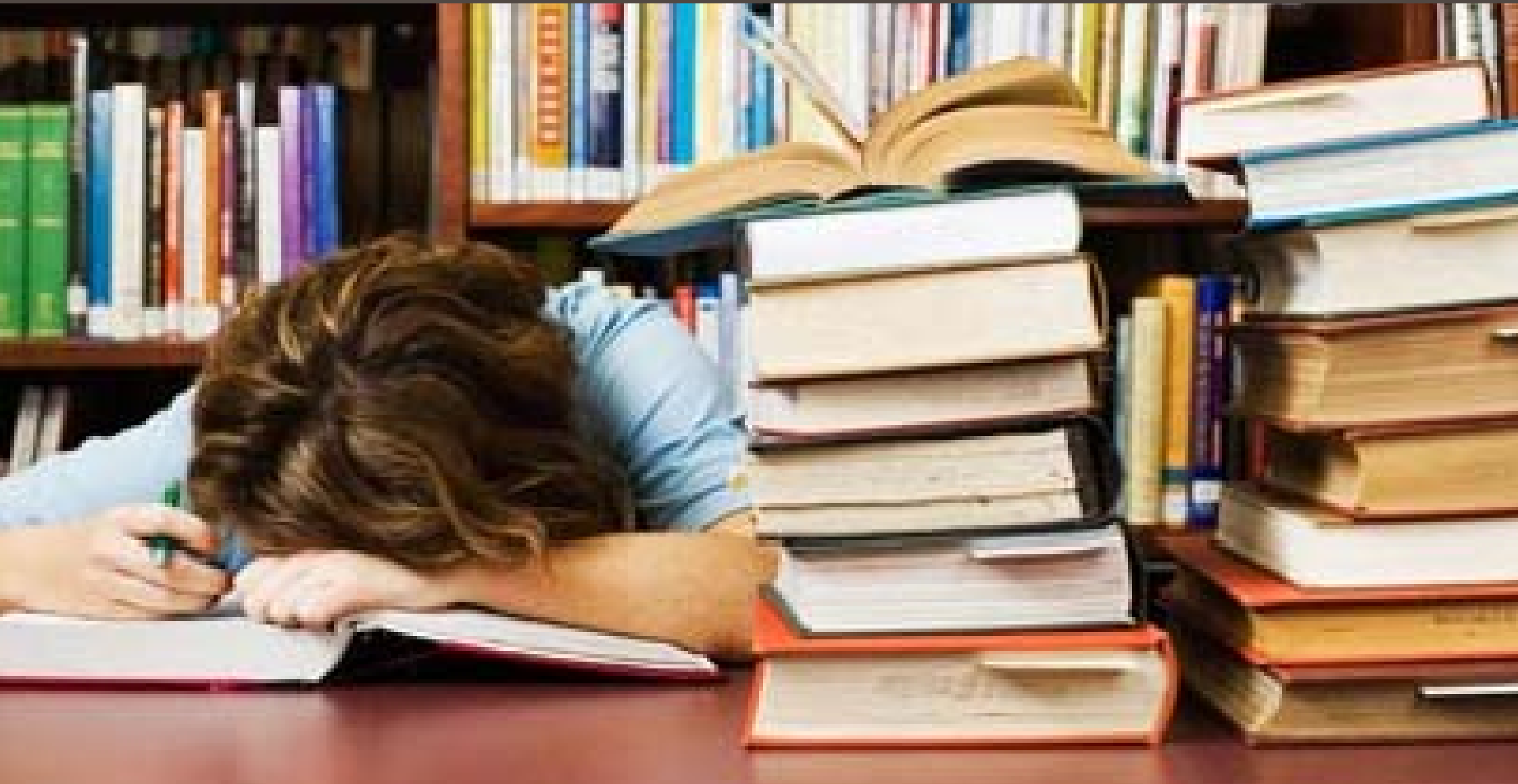
A large, empty lecture hall with rows of green upholstered seats and wooden desks. A wooden podium is visible in the foreground on the right. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and wooden paneling on the walls.

start Micros... Vodafo... T. Ram... untile...



#1

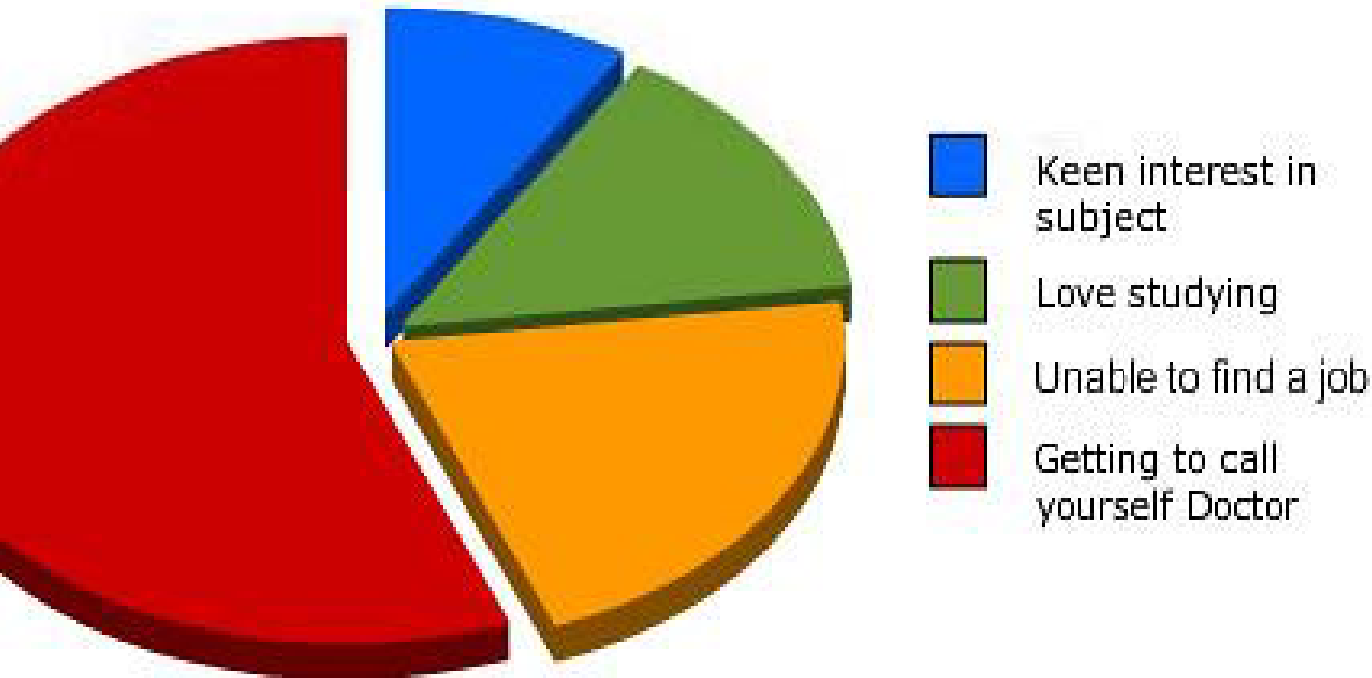
Doctoral students are not adequately prepared



#1

Doctoral students are not prepared

Motivation for doing a PhD



GraphJam.com

- A doctoral program requires **full-time commitment**
- Lots of reading, thinking, reasoning, analyzing data, writing, presenting, etc



#2

Doctoral students have low self-efficacy

#2

Doctoral students have low self-efficacy

- Self-efficacy is the belief that one has the ability to attain a certain goal.
- Low self-efficacy - the avoidance of attempting new things due to a fear of failure.
- To overcome, engage in actions that are likely to develop skills and bring a sense of accomplishment.



**BELIEVING
In
Yourself is
The first
Secret to
SUCCESS..**



#3

Doctoral students do not create synergy

#3

Doctoral students do not create synergy



“creating a synergy between course projects that require a research paper can facilitate the creation of better products”

#4

Doctoral students are too reactive





Doctoral students are too reactive

- Doctoral Students must be proactive and realize they are in charge of their own program.
- Students who go through the program in reactive mode by merely reacting to program requirements tend to get less out of their doctoral education than students who are proactive

#5

Doctoral students do not carefully evaluate opportunity costs



#5

Doctoral students do not carefully evaluate opportunity costs

- Every opportunity should be evaluated strategically.
- Does this (new) project contribute to my doctoral education?
- Avoid saying yes to every opportunity because the combined effort to complete each activity would overload the student and cause counterproductive results.



#6

Doctoral students fall into a lull period

#6

Doctoral students fall into a lull period

- After successfully going through the stress and the psychological hurdle of defence presentations, students feel relieved and take a month off. That month becomes two, then three months and etc.
- Tremendous start-up costs in every interaction.



#7

Doctoral students do not manage their supervisors



Doctoral students do not manage their advisor

- Do not go into a meeting with an open-ended question that have not thought through.
- Instead, go in prepared with the issues, their possible solutions and solicit advisor's advice...
- Never hide from your supervisors.

(It is a pathological behaviour that students indulge in, particularly if they cannot deliver on a project).



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WWW.PHDCOMICS.

I MADE A FEW
WEAKS TO THE
DRAFT PAPER
YOU SENT ME.

B. SMITH
PROFESSOR

YOU...
RE-WROTE THE
ENTIRE THING.

YES, IT'S EASIER FOR
ME TO RE-WRITE IT
THAN TO POINT OUT
ALL THE THINGS YOU
DID WRONG.

I CALL IT
LEARNING BY
DEMONSTRATION.

JORGE CHAM © 2011

WHAT ARE WE
DEMONSTRATING?

THAT YOU'RE
BAD WRITER.



#8

Doctoral students do not seek help



Doctoral students do not seek help

- Students try to resolve the problem their own means rather than ask for guidance which can save hours of fruitless work.
- Even an e-mail to someone whose article uses the same technique can compress the frustration cycle.



#9

Doctoral students do not build asset bas

#9

Doctoral students do not build an asset base

- Students should use the time in their program to build their personal value as a co-author
- If I work on a project, what do I bring to the table?
- Can I cultivate those skills while in the program?
- Students who do not build an asset base tend to be “followers”



#10

Doctoral students are too ambitious

Keep your chin up.
No one expected you
to save the world,
otherwise you would
have been born wearing
a cape and tights.

Just do
the best you can.



10

Doctoral Students Are Too Ambitious

#10

Doctoral students are too ambitious

- **The best dissertation is a done dissertation.**
- Narrow down topics into a project that is not only interesting and relevant, but also *defensible* and *feasible*.
- Decide early on what is your contribution.
- It does not matter at all what you get your Ph.D. in.
- All that matters is that you get one. It's a PhD, not a Nobel prize.
- It's the **training that counts**--not the topic.

#11

Doctoral students are not politically-astute



#11 Doctoral students are not politically astute

- Do not enter into a “no-win” situation
- Be friendly, receptive and responsive to faculty.
- Treat your committee with respect.
- Be professional in demeanour, sensitive to intellectual property issues in joint projects , avoid taking unilateral actions that can create potential conflicts.



#12

Doctoral students don't follow timelines

#12

Doctoral students tend to procrastinate

- Don't wait until inspiration strikes to write your proposal or thesis.
- You can write when you are not inspired or also when you are tired and exhausted.
- You don't have to wait until you are well rested, clear minded and or enthusiastic. Do it now!
- Write a few pages a day to get momentum going.

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"I'm not procrastinating. I'm proactively delaying implementation of the energy-intensive phase of the project until the enthusiasm factor is at its maximum effectiveness."

#13

Doctoral students don't balance their lives



#13

Doctoral students don't balance their lives

- Demands of the dissertation can cause students to neglect other areas of their life, including their relationships, their hobbies, and their health.
- If life gets out of balance for too long, it can take an emotional toll and lead to burn out and decreased productivity.



#14

Doctoral students don't have back-ups

#14

Doctoral students don't have back-ups

- Back-up your work regularly.
- On pen drive, hard disk, cloud storage, etc.
- Example: Make 2 back-ups – Hourly or daily backup, and a weekly or monthly backup.
- **It pays to be paranoid.**

#15

Doctoral students leave too late





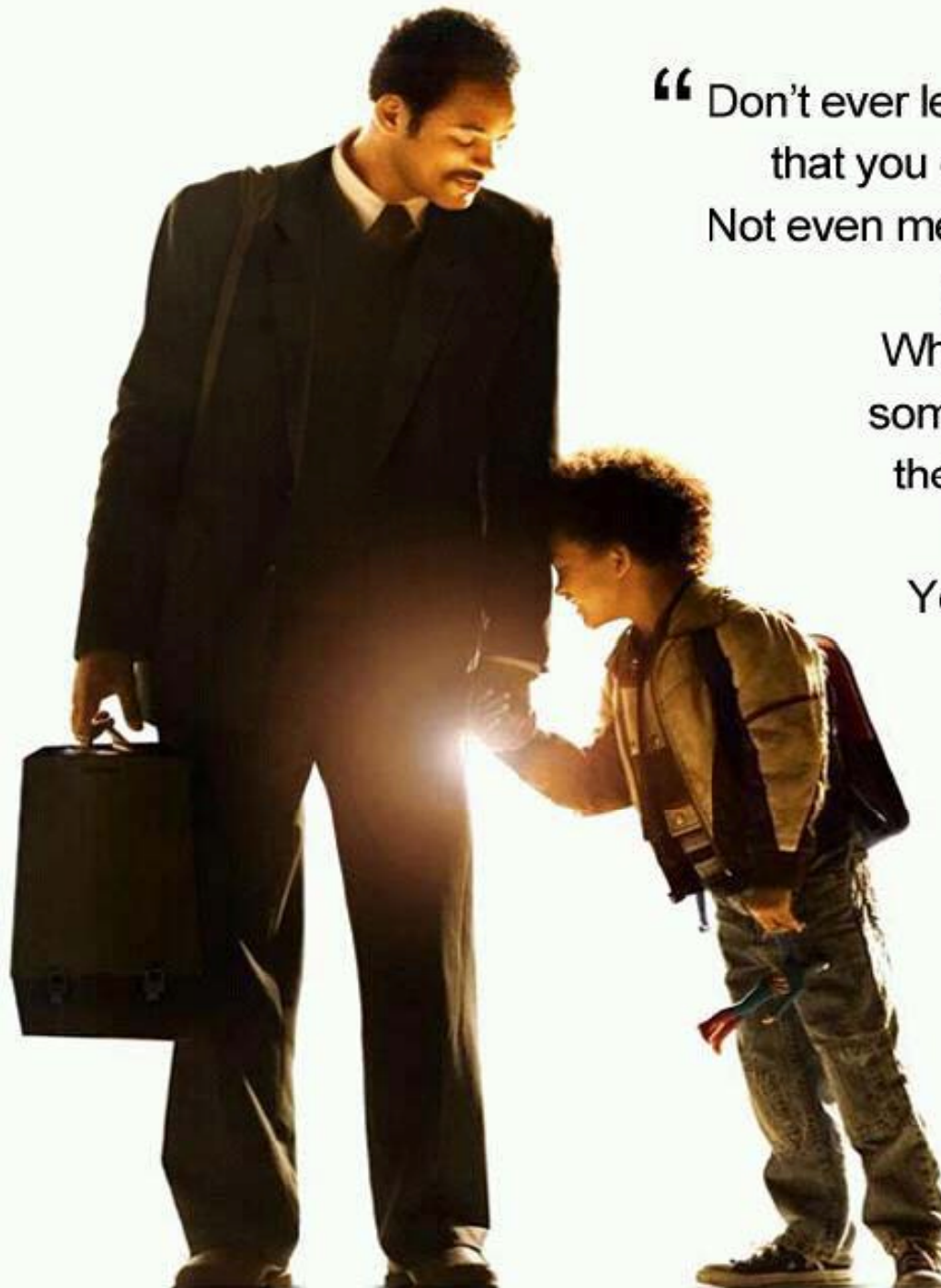
#16

Doctoral students expect perfectionism

#16

Doctoral students expect perfectionism

- Perfectionism is a tragic affliction in academia, since it tends to hit the brightest the hardest.
- Perfection cannot be attained. It is approached in the limit.
- Students that can't begin to write until they have the perfect structure of the paper mapped out will never get started.
- "Good enough" is better than "perfect."



“ Don't ever let someone tell you
that you can't do something.
Not even me. You got a dream,
you gotta protect it.
When people can't do
something themselves,
they're gonna tell you
that you can't do it.
You want something,
go get it. Period.”

~ Will Smith
(The Pursuit of Happiness, film)



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING