Getting what you came for: working with your committee

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What I am going to tell you:

• Know yourself
• Know the system
• “Manage up”
How to choose and advisor

- Before starting grad school
- Research interests
- Funding considerations
- Advisor as mentor
- The rest of the committee...
What advisor does for you:

- Develop a plan of work
- Guides research
- Assesses progress
- Timely feedback
- Rigorous but fair
What good advisors provide

• Coach and model good professional practices
• Transmits knowledge (written and unwritten rules)
• Advocacy
• Helps in job search
Please list 3-4 traits of a bad committee chair or member

You have 2 minutes
Bad Advisors/mentors

• Neglect
• Keeps student in darkness
• Little or no feedback
• Abuse
Building relationships

- Get to know your committee
- Trust and confide
- Take initiative
- Network
- Prepare for meetings
- Ask lots of questions (Am I on target?)
Recipe for Success - main ingredients

1. Organizational skills
2. Social skills
3. Psychological traits
Organizational skills

- Manage time
- Organize (goals and milestones)
- Daily/weekly progress
- Balance commitments
- Ethics
- Documentation
- Preparation
Social skills

- Self image
- Read external cues
- Work schedule
- Join support group
- “Manage up”
- Stress management
- Sense of humor
- Social functions
Psychological characteristics

• Maturity
• Tenacity
• Resilience
• Love what you do
• Attitude
• Be assertive but humble
Recipe for Success

- Write your thesis/dissertation as you go along
- Nip problems in the bud
- Become an excellent communicator – explain your work to lay people
- Be flexible
- Learn to tolerate disappointment
For international, minority or female students

- Master English language
- Understand US higher education system (learn to compete)
- Get a mentor
- Form support group
- Socialize into your discipline
- Professional help
Preparing for Prelims and Final Exams

- Observe and practice
- Sit in on a survey course of discipline (or teach one)
- Prepare list of possible questions
- Play devil’s advocate with self
- Try to answer everything, but if you don’t know admit it
Why students get in trouble:

• Procrastination
• Miscalculation
• “I can get away with this”
• Self-delusion
Most important advice

• “Manage up”
• Publish, publish, publish
• Work very, very hard
• Keep your nose clean
• Don’t blame other people for the way things are
THE END
BEGIN TO MANAGE NOW!

• Please take 2-3 minutes and partner with a neighbor. Talk about a difficulty you each is having and suggest ways to resolve issue.