



# WHAT I WISH I KNEW WHEN I WAS IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Based on an excellent book by Tina Seelig:

**WHAT I WISH I KNEW  
WHEN I WAS 20**

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# LIFE IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

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- Not like undergrad.
  - You can't succeed just by doing what you are told.
  - Your road to success not predefined.
    - Yes! You have your own road!
- You are responsible for your own success
  - What about your “advisor”?
    - Think of her/him as a mentor.

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# BE PROACTIVE

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- Figure out what you need to do
  - And, do it!
- You need to proactively ...
  - Do research: find problems, solve problems, build systems, experiment, ...
  - Communicate: write papers, give talks, network, ...
  - Manage your relationships: colleagues, advisor, ...
- Stretch the boundaries of your current skills
  - Take risks every now and then.

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# KEEP YOURSELF MOTIVATED

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- That's right! You need to do the work of keeping yourself motivated.
  - Spend time reading books that inspire you.
  - Talk to people who inspire you.
  - ...
- Look for motivation inside.
  - Don't wait to be pushed by others.
  - Don't wait for someone else's permission to do what you want.

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# PLAN

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- If you don't, other people and circumstances will define your future.
- Envision your graduation day
  - What is next? Are you feeling excited?
  - Make sure you are!
- Identify what you want and why.
  - Gives you motivation.
  - Clarifies values.
    - Remember essentialism?
  - Gives you direction.

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# BE PREPARED FOR PROBLEMS

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- I see ... problems in your future!
  - Research ups and downs
  - Conflicts (with your friends, advisor, ...)
  - Procrastination
  - ...
- Embrace problems; don't avoid them
  - Opportunities lie within problems
- “The bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity. Nobody will pay you to solve a non-problem” — Vinod Khosla, Co-founder of Sun Microsystems