



WHAT I WISH I KNEW WHEN I WAS IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

Yashar Ganjali

University of Toronto

Based on an excellent book by Tina Seelig:

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

LIFE IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

- 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.

BE PROACTIVE

- 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.

KEEP YOURSELF MOTIVATED

- 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.

PLAN

- 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.

BE PREPARED FOR PROBLEMS

- 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