Staying Focused on your Career: Challenges and Solutions for the Early and Mid-Career Toxicologist

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6 March 2020
My Career Path

- PhD in toxicology, University of Madras
- Postdoc - ULM & UGA, 2001-2006
- Toxicologist, DuPont Haskell, 2007-2016
  - Toxicologist/Study Director
  - Team Lead
  - Technical Manager
- Manager, Safety Assessment, Battelle, 2016-2019
- Principal Scientist, BI AH, 2019- to date
Challenges

- First industry job - is this the right decision?
- Corporate culture - deer in the headlight
- What next - move up or move out?
- Am I a good leader?
- Did I make the right decision?
- Too busy to take care of myself/family - what for?
- What are my priorities?
What worked for me?

Attributes: Hard work, deliver on promises, happy and energetic, intentional, persistence

Strategies

► Knowing what I don’t know
► Knowing what I want
► Managing up
► Making my manager look good and making my team feel good
► Facing difficult situations vs running away
► Doing right things and not easy things - earning respect vs friendship
► Accepting the mistakes and learning from it
What worked for me?

- Stepping back; talking to others
- Reflecting, making the decision and moving on
- I am a leader, not a manager
- Taking care of people
- Being comfortable with uncomfortable
- One size does not fit all
My 2 cents

- Work hard
- Make and keep promises
- Be intentional and Reflect
- Network (internal and external)
- Feedback (both ways)
- Be accountable
- Challenges present opportunities
- Manage up, down, and sideways

- Own your career
- Do not hesitate to demand what you want and deserve
- Humility ≠ not weak
- Assertive ≠ arrogance
- One size does not fit all
- I am indispensable - myth
- Keep things in perspective
Quotes

- It is not about what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.

- A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not on the branch but on it’s own wings. Always believe in yourself.

- Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to.

- I can not change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.