LEARNING TO SAY  
"NO"  
(and sometimes "YES")

The Early Years
WHAT YOU THINK:
• “Fully trained”; brilliant clinician and scientist (they all say so)
• Enthusiasm, conviction, hope (“they’ll give me a chance”)
• Promises (space, money, “support”)  
• “Get out of my way; leave me alone!”

The Early Years
The paradoxes:
• Fully trained → still a rookie
• Leave me alone → pay attention to me
• Support me → no money; clinical effort?
• Academic Nirvana???
Road to Nirvana

Conflict and Confusion

The Early Years

WHAT YOU NEED TO THINK:
• Your training has just begun and life may turn out to be a bit different (realities of practice, research grants and program management, faculty life, other people's expectations).
• Environment, environment, environment!
ENVIROMENT

Environment

\[ \text{Boss Administration} \]

\[ \text{YOU} \]

Smart, interesting, interested colleagues

Your mentor

Build an environment that meets all of your objectives.

The Colleagues and the Environment

- They are the environment!
- Reach out and cultivate them.
- Keep exploring in and out of your department.
- Keep the doors open.
- If conflicts arise, set up "Geneva Rules".

Colleagues are your resource. You don't need them QD, but when you do need them, they're there.

"Geneva Rules" -
The Administration

- Administration = division head, chair, dean, UW president, etc.
- They want you to succeed, but they usually deliver a mixed message.
- They are happy if you deliver (research/clinical productivity, teaching, stay out of trouble), and they are not when you don't.

How do you know what to do and how do you keep on track?

This is what mentors do for you

Mentors

- Who are they? -- Environmentalists
- What do they do? -- They take an interest in you, guide you, act as a sounding board, help you set priorities.
- How do you identify them? -- Role models, "successful" academics, right chemistry
You and Your Mentor

- Environment building
- Evaluation of activities, use of time
- Problem solving (scientific, political, clinical)
- Grant writing
- Choices – paths to pursue or avoid

Saying “NO” (and sometimes “Yes”)

- Key issues: time, money, expectations; they create big conflicts.
- Use your mentor for perspective/help.
- Learn discipline and learn from the mentor how to protect yourself while also addressing the conflicting demands of the Bosses.

Time vs. Money

- Time ↔ Money
- Money protects time (e.g. an RCDA is good for you and for the Bosses. You generate guaranteed time to do research, and they get cash to pay for you).
- $1 in salary on grants = ca $5 billed for clinical services!
Saying “NO” to yourself

• Need to make choices; very few can do it all (?? triple threat).
• Need to be self disciplined (e.g. be selective and focused in research and clinical activities; weed frequently and grow the rest!)

Saying “NO” to your colleagues

• Everyone has an opinion about what you should be doing.
• Pick carefully the things that you commit to and say “no” to the rest (e.g. the next chapter or CME lecture, after you have done a few, probably will not get you promoted but will use up your time).

Saying “NO” to the Bosses

• Remember: they want you to succeed but have other things on their minds.
• Make sure you are pursuing the agreed on objectives.
• Money protects time (e.g. RCDA). If no money, someone else will figure out what to do with your time.
“NO” and “YES”

- Your academic community benefits from your success. Protect your opportunity to be successful.
- Don’t be afraid to say “no”. Saying “no” really means “yes” if it makes you a more effective member of your community and an environmentalist (a next generation mentor).

Saying “YES”

- Say “yes” to the things that matter to you and your environment (e.g. do some student/resident teaching and take some call, but avoid always covering the Boss).
- A&P committee criteria -- say “yes” to requirements that affect promotion.

Some Thoughts (Clowes’s Rules)

- Environment, environment, environment
- Spend a lot of time yacking
- Leave the door open and keep the trade barriers down
More Thoughts

- Perseverence, especially with grant proposals, is rewarded.
- The world changes every 6 months; be optimistic!
- Be selective. You can only get the top 10% of your list done.
- Weed frequently and grow the rest.

Even More Thoughts

- There is no unique road to Nirvana, just your road.
- Don’t punch someone else’s time card.
- Mentors are environmentalists. Make use of them.
- Learn to say “no” (and sometimes “yes”).