Professional Development: Why Bother?

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SEAS Professional Development Seminar

Or: What they didn’t teach me in graduate school

- Graduate school is all about learning to do research.
- Any job you get after grad school may involve research, but will involve so much more …
Speaking of which ...

- Now that I’ve got a PhD, what on earth should I do with it?
  - Academia?
  - A research lab?
  - Industry?
  - A startup?
  - Law school?

And before that ...

- There is this small detail separating me from my PhD -- my advisor continually refers to “my thesis.”
- I know how to write papers, how do I write a thesis?
- Waldo: The thesis that is done is infinitely better than the thesis that is not done.
It’s my first day of work

• Now what?
• Getting started: what do you actually do once you get out of the HR office?
• For that matter, what does HR stand for anyway?
• I’m 20-something or 30-something, why do I care about 401Ks, retirement planning, or other benefits?

I used to think I was busy...

• Grad school is an infinite time sink.
• Now imagine that getting your research done is only one-half, one-quarter, one-tenth of what you have to get done.
• How can you possibly ever accomplish anything?
**Having a Boss**

- A boss is different from an advisor.
- A boss is different from a parent.
- A boss is different from a mentor.

**Your time vs Their time**

- My team expects me to work late; my family expects me to be home for dinner.
- What do I do?
I want to be ...

- Who do you want to be when you grow up?
- How do you get from here to there?
- What do you do when you discover that:
  - The road is washed out?
  - You no longer like where you’re going?
  - You find Mt. Everest standing between here and there?

Why?

- Think of this as “Getting the most out of your life.”
- Who could turn that down?