

NEGOTIATION/ DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

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- Difficult topics
- Difficult people

YOUR RIGHTS

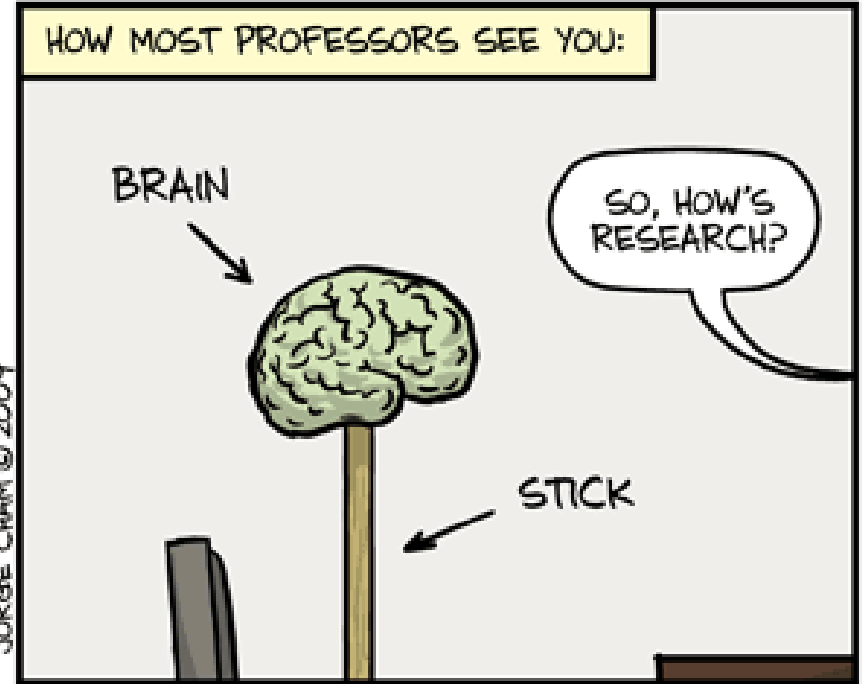
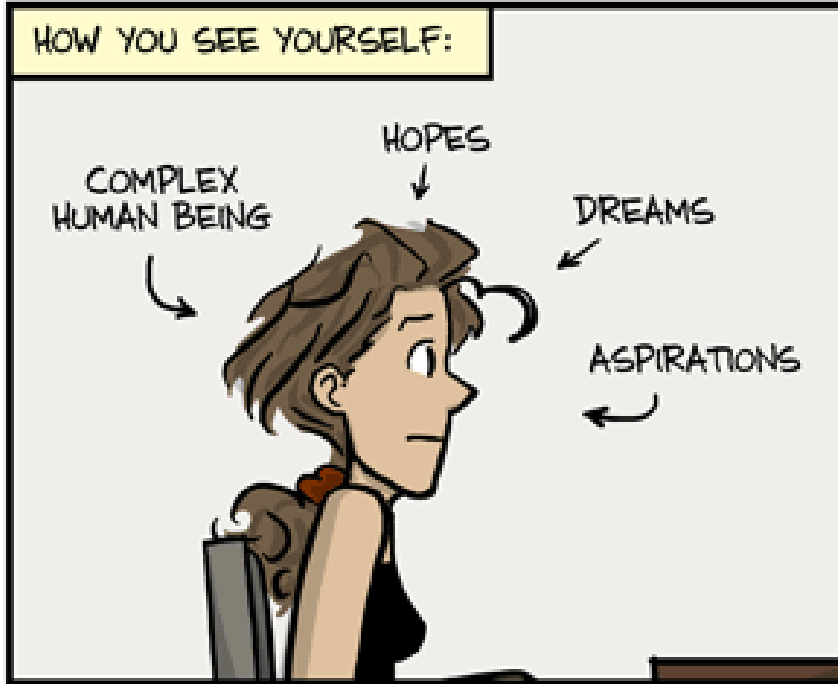
You deserve:

- A fair and reasonable working environment
 - *Decent pay*
 - *Decent hours*
 - *Access to union, holidays, sick leave*

You also deserve:

- To be happy & healthy
 - *No bullying*
 - *No unnecessary stress*

ACADEMIA



THE PROBLEM

Sources of stress

- High workload
- Increasing competitiveness (funding cuts!)
- Poor job security
- Culture of long hours
- Lack of leadership skill (Peter's principle)
- Relaxed attitudes towards bullying behaviour
 - *“If you're not stressed, you're not working hard enough”*

THE PROBLEM

Some examples of arseholery:

- Personal criticism
 - *“You’re just not cut out to be a scientist”*
- Unreasonable expectations
 - *“I’ll email it to you on Friday, so you can work on over the weekend”*
- Unfair attribution / lack of recognition
 - *“I’m going to let [my friend] be first author on this, to help his REF submission”*

THE PROBLEM

Some examples of arseholery:

- Lack of encouragement / interest in you / your work
 - *“I just don’t find your work interesting, so it’s obviously not a priority to me”*
- Emotional blackmail
 - *“I’ve been waiting for ages! If this doesn’t get published soon, I’ll lose my job”*
- Threats
 - *“If you insist on perusing this, I’m afraid I won’t have time to apply for your contract renewal”*

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

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DIFFICULT TOPICS

Example: Authorship

THE AUTHOR LIST: GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The first author
Senior grad student on the project. Made the figures.

The third author
First year student who actually did the experiments, performed the analysis and wrote the whole paper. Thinks being third author is "fair".

The second-to-last author
Ambitious assistant professor or post-doc who instigated the paper.

Michaels, C., Lee, E. F., Sap, P. S., Nichols, S. T., Oliveira, L., Smith, B. S.

The second author
Grad student in the lab that has nothing to do with this project, but was included because he/she hung around the group meetings (usually for the food).

The middle authors
Author names nobody really reads. Reserved for undergrads and technical staff.

The last author
The head honcho. Hasn't even read the paper but, hey, he got the funding, and his famous name will get the paper accepted.

AUTHORSHIP

Scenario A

- **Background:** You draft a paper based on data collected by a former colleague, who has left academia due to stress. You send it to the senior author for comments.
- **Challenge:** They thank you for your effort, give you a list of names of additional people who should be added as authors, but tell you to move your former colleague to the acknowledgements.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be pro-active

- Discuss tricky issues (e.g. authorship) early
 - *Reduces risk of (unhelpful) 'assumptions'*

AUTHORSHIP

Scenario B

- **Background:** You work hard on analysing data, draft the introduction, methods, & results for a paper and send it to the senior author
- **Challenge:** They thank you for your effort, explain that they will draft the discussion, and will be first and corresponding author

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be pro-active

- Discuss tricky issues (e.g. authorship order) early
 - *Reduces risk of (unhelpful) 'assumptions'*

Be assertive

- Neither passive, nor aggressive
- Firm, but polite

AUTHORSHIP

Scenario C

- **Background:** After a preliminary discussion, you are assigned support (second) authorship on a paper. Your job is to perform the analyses & write part of the methods & results.
- **Challenge:** The analyses is much more complex than originally anticipated, taking weeks and weeks to complete. The paper ends up being very different to planned, & you have to completely redraft of the methods & results. You also make very heavy changes to the introduction and discussion

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be pro-active

- Discuss tricky issues (e.g. authorship order) early
 - *Reduces risk of (unhelpful) 'assumptions'*

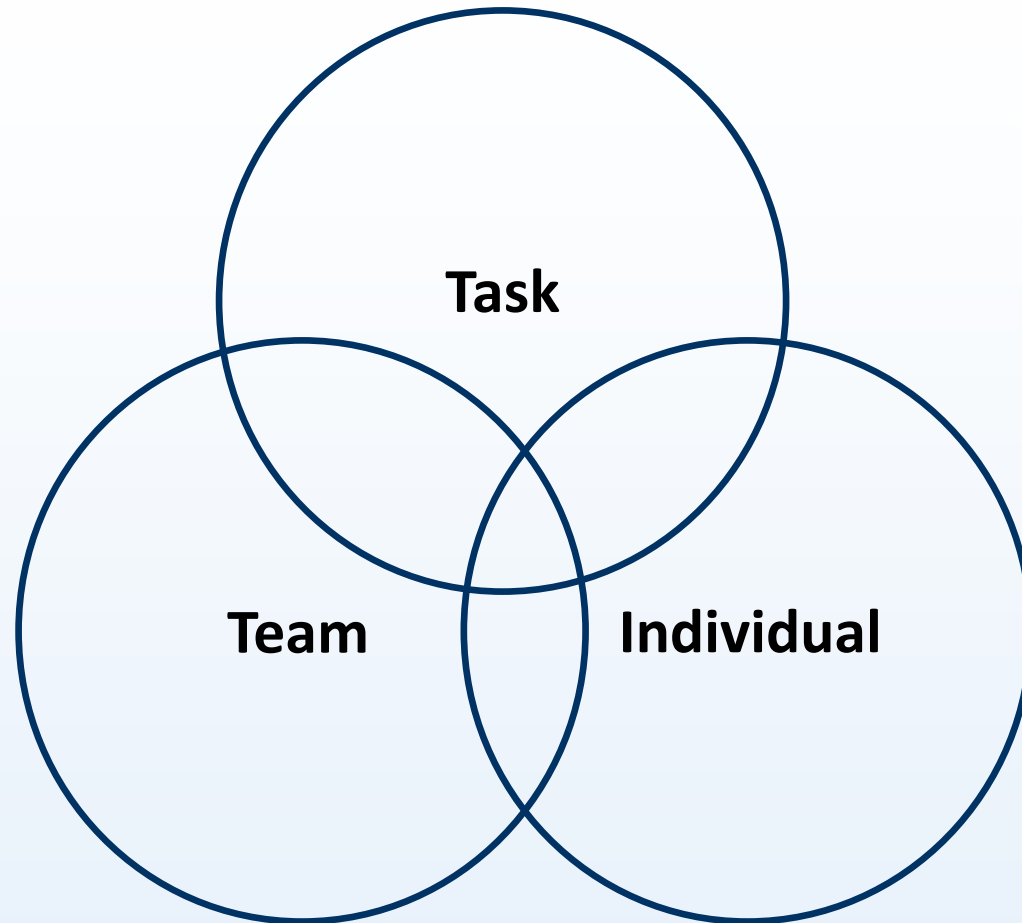
Be assertive

- Neither passive, nor aggressive
- Firm, but polite

Become your own leader

- Have a personal strategy
- Balance needs of yourself and those around you

LEADERSHIP



(Adair's) Functional Leadership Model

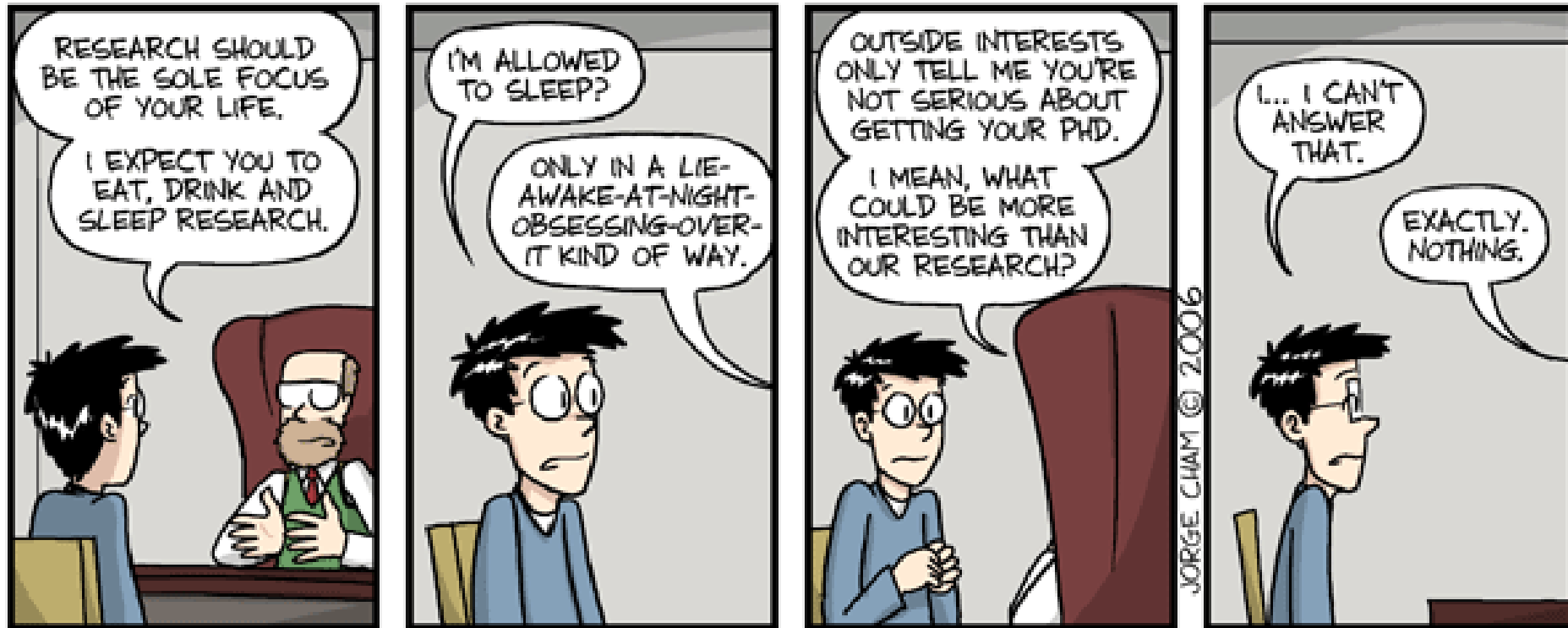
LEADERSHIP



Being a 'good egg' ECR

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Example: The enslaved RA



DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Scenario A

- **Background:** You work hard to finish the draft of a paper by the end of the month, and send it to your manager as promised.
- **Challenge:** Your manager asks where the 'other work' is that they were expecting.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be pro-active

- Take a proactive part in planning & decision making
 - *Be clear about what's agreed – in advance*
 - *Be honest about how long things will take*

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Scenario B

- **Background:** You're having lunch on Friday – you are looking forward to the weekend, because you are going away to see friends
- **Challenge:** Your manager sends some data that needs 'urgently analysing' by 'close of play'.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be pro-active

- Take a proactive part in planning & decision making
 - *Be clear about what's agreed – in advance*
 - *Be honest about how long things will take*

Be assertive

- Protect your needs and your health

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Scenario C

- **Background:** You are coming to the end of your PhD (and/or contract) and are thinking of applying for jobs elsewhere.
- **Challenge:** Your manager says they will put you on a grant, but asks that you confirm your commitment & loyalty.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be pro-active

- Take a proactive part in planning & decision making
 - *Be clear about what's agreed – in advance*
 - *Be honest about how long things will take*

Be assertive

- Protect your needs and your health

Become your own leader

- If you're not happy > try to create change
- If you're **still** not happy > look to leave