A personal view on a career in research

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Structure

- I do not seek to tell others what to do or how to develop their careers, but merely to share my personal views about aspects of my own career
- Following are thoughts and ideas I have applied to guide my own career development: they are part of what has guided me
- Many or all of these ideas may already be known to you
- I find them to be particularly important in times of stress, hardship and difficulty

Strategy for development of my own career

- I have sought to apply advice from outstanding individuals as a principal strategy: many of you may have done the same
- My own career has been in biomedical research and its therapeutic applications but this strategy may be relevant in other fields
- Here I will identify principles that I've found to be important guides
- I aim to provide a platform for a wider discussion

A personal approach

- Research was something I really wanted to do and I did it because I thought I could make a meaningful contribution
- I tried to understand what I aimed to do early on and to prepare myself accordingly
- I knew I must take a long view: success seldom comes overnight
- I determined that to be supported by others to do research is a privilege
- Research is its own reward
- I aimed always to choose the right question
- Above all, I aimed to serve

Concise statements of principle in any science (Oxford English Dictionary)

APHORISMS
If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants

Isaac Newton

If we knew what it was we were doing, it wouldn’t be called research, would it?

Albert Einstein

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts

Winston Churchill

Be sure to put your feet in the right place, then stand firm

Abraham Lincoln

Of two competing theories, the simpler is to be preferred

‘Ockham’s razor’: William of Ockham

Falsifiability is a key part of a scientific statement

Karl Popper
Donald Rumsfeld
It is probably more important to know what we don’t know than to know what we do know

H L Mencken
To every complex question there’s a simple answer and it’s always wrong

Albert Einstein
Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler

Ludwig Wittgenstein
Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do

Francis Crick of Linus Pauling
A man who is always right almost never says anything significant
Research is the art of the soluble

We haven’t much money, so we’ve got to think

Even a broken clock is right twice a day

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool

Never get so busy that you don’t have time to think