



You can do this!

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language

Naledi Saul, Director

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UCSF Office of Career &
Professional Development
Student Academic Affairs



The Manage Up Series

career.ucsf.edu/ManageUp

UCSF Office of Career & Professional Development
Student Academic Affairs

Our UCSF Community

3,198 Students, 1,111 postdocs = 4,309

Our Goal



Every single student and postdoc at UCSF has the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate your career successfully.

Our 2 Minute Ask

1. Try anything you learned today
2. Tell someone else
3. Share the slides
4. Give a person a card
5. Put up a flyer (or take one down)
6. Normalize it...on social media
UCSFOCPD   
7. Give us feedback
8. Come back....and bring a friend
9. Greet each other on campus
10. Do your thing

Everyone deserves to belong to a healthy, functioning workplace

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Professional Development
Student Academic Affairs

What will you learn today?

Define what negotiation is and why you will need to negotiate with your research mentor.

Assess if you're ready to engage your research mentor.

Describe steps to reflect and prep for a conversation. What do you need to know? How can you find what you need?

Articulate your 'open'. Consider different approaches to introduce the conversation.

Discuss strategies to "work with the yes," "work with the no," and "work with the fog" (the maybe).

Consider next steps to manage your relationship

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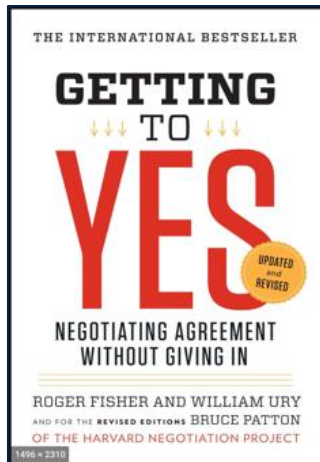
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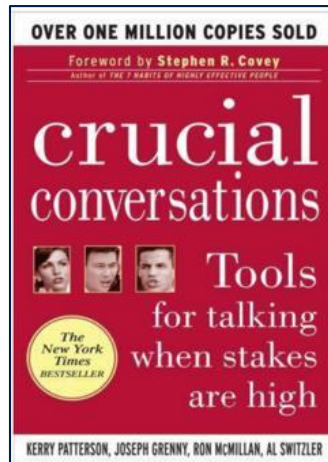
What's the basis for our work today?

It's annoying, but there isn't one resource that perfectly encompasses effective negotiation for biomedical students and postdocs

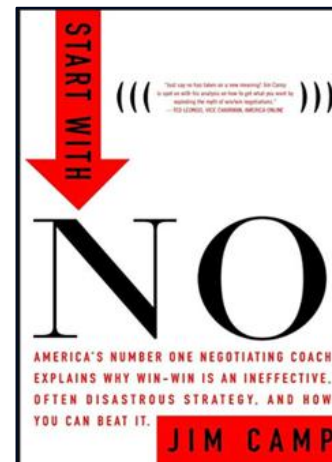
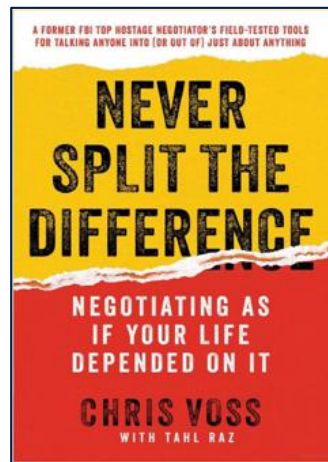
The Gold Standard



Psychological Factors



Different Cultural Norms About Negotiating



Power Differentials

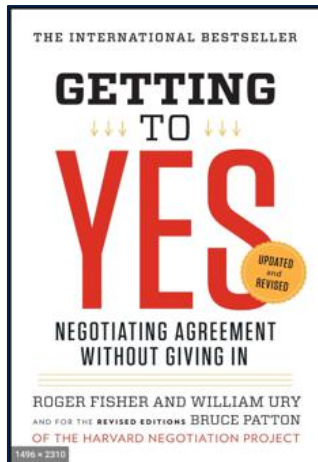
John French & Bertram Raven
Referent (reputation)
Legitimate
Expert
Reward
Coercive
Informational

What's a negotiation?

What is **Negotiation**? “A back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.”

Getting to Yes

The Gold Standard



Naledi,
why are you calling this a
'negotiation'
and not 'career conversation'
with my
research mentor?

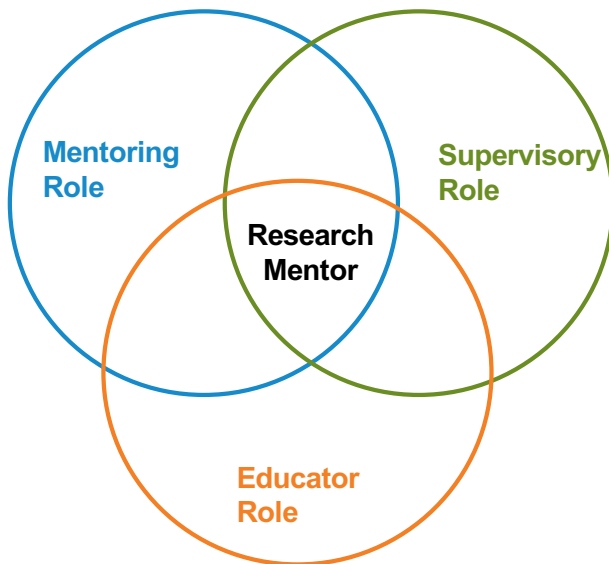


Why do we say 'negotiation' and not 'career conversation'?

What is **Negotiation**? "A back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when **you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.**"

Getting to Yes

Your research mentor has multiple roles



... interests with a mentor:
you... bas. Your... metrics of success are their

•But at times, almost everyone has different goals and benchmarks for success than their instructor and their supervisor.

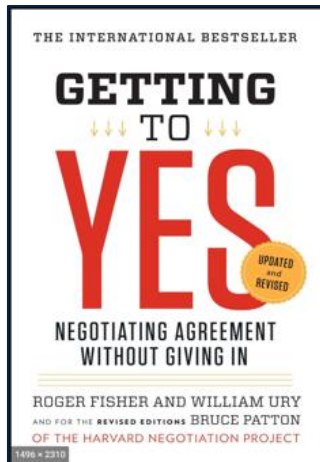
•So, at times, you will need to negotiate for what you need.



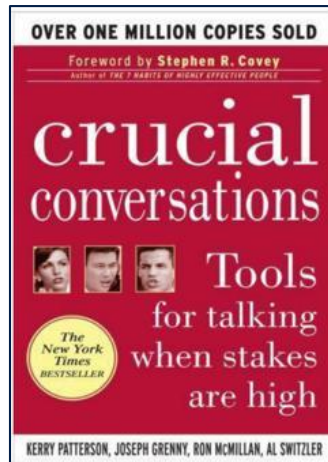
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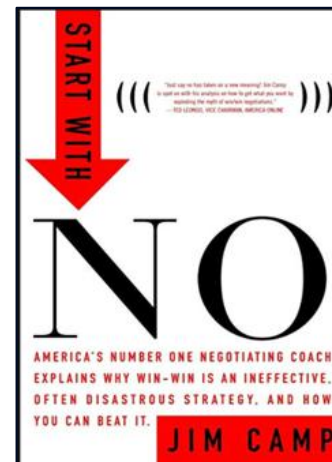
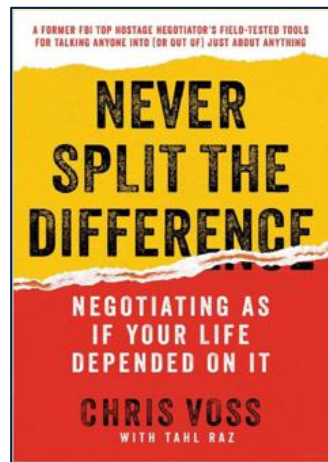
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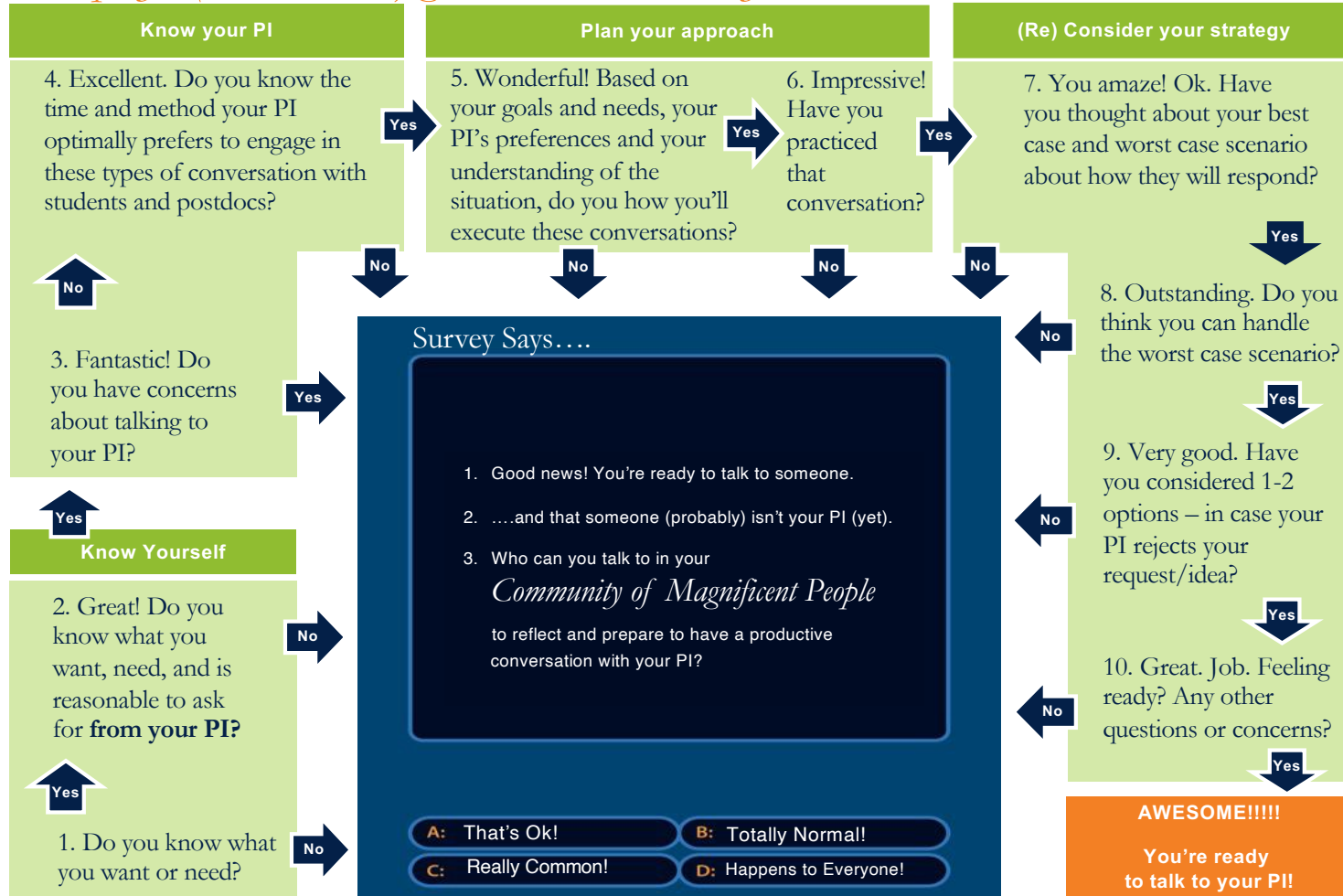
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Let's play a(n assessment) game: Are You Ready?



INDY: INDEPENDENCE



CAS: CAREER EXPLOR.



PEARL: PERSONAL



PETE: PROGRESSION

Let's play a(n assessment) game: Are You Ready?

Know your PI

4. Excellent. Do you know the time and method your PI optimally prefers to engage in these types of conversation with students and postdocs?

Yes →

3. Fantastic! Do you have concerns about talking to your PI?

No ↑

Yes ↑

Know Yourself

2. Great! Do you know what you want, need, and is reasonable to ask for from your PI?

Yes ↑

1. Do you know what you want or need?

Plan your approach

5. Wonderful! Based on your goals and needs, your PI's preferences and your understanding of the situation, do you how you'll execute these conversations?

Yes →

6. Impressive! Have you practiced that conversation?

Yes →

(Re) Consider your strategy

7. You amaze! Ok. Have you thought about your best case and worst case scenario about how they will respond?

Yes ↓

8. Outstanding. Do you think you can handle the worst case scenario?

Yes ↓

9. Very good. Have you considered 1-2 options – in case your PI rejects your request/idea?

Yes ↓

10. Great. Job. Feeling ready? Any other questions or concerns?

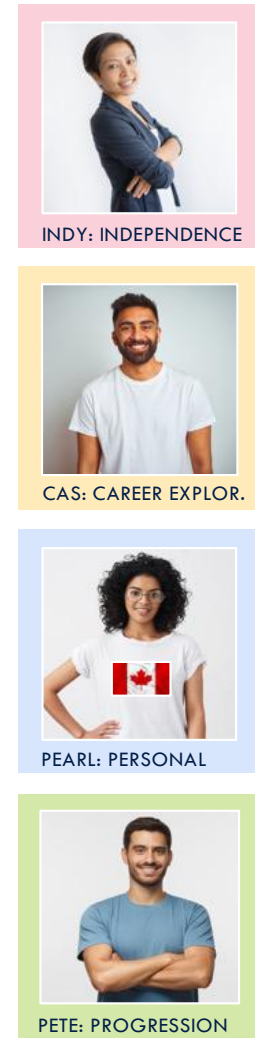
Yes ↓

AWESOME!!!!

You're ready to talk to your PI!

Power Differentials

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Let's play a(n assessment) game: Are You Ready?



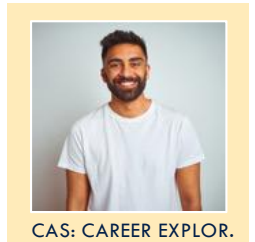
Survey Says...

1. Good news! You're ready to talk to someone.
2.and that someone (probably) isn't your PI (yet).
3. Who can you talk to in your
Community of Magnificent People
to reflect and prepare to have a productive conversation with your PI?

A: That's Ok!
B: Totally Normal!
C: Really Common!
D: Happens to Everyone!



INDY: INDEPENDENCE



CAS: CAREER EXPLOR.

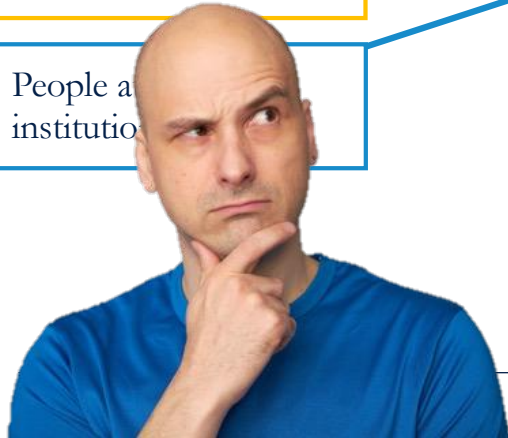


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Who's in my *Community of Magnificent People?* (COMP)
[COMP]ensating for the support you can't solely get from your PI



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Who's in my *Community of Magnificent People?* (COMP)
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1. "What kind of support do you offer students/postdocs?"
2. "What level of confidentiality can you have when students/postdocs discuss issues?"

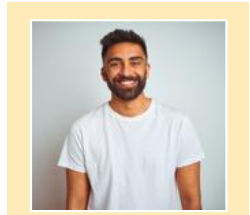
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Informational	



Questions or Concerns?	
Career of Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Career and Professional Development counselors t (career.ucsf.edu)
Progression & Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars (postdocs.ucsf.edu) <i>postdocs</i> Associate Dean of Graduate Programs (graduate.ucsf.edu/about) <i>students</i> Office of Career and Professional Development (career.ucsf.edu)
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Resource Center Advisors (learn.ucsf.edu) <i>students</i> Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars [OPS] (postdocs.ucsf.edu) <i>postdocs</i>
Psychological Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Health and Counseling Counselors (health.ucsf.edu) <i>students</i> Faculty and Staff Assistance Program Counselors (tiny.ucsf.edu/FSAP) <i>postdocs</i>
Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Advocate* (careadvocate.ucsf.edu) – specifically sexual harassment Office of the Ombuds* (ombuds.ucsf.edu) Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination [OPHD] (ophd.ucsf.edu) Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars (postdocs.ucsf.edu) <i>postdocs</i> Associate Dean of Graduate Programs (graduate.ucsf.edu/about) <i>students</i>
Disability Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Disability Services (sds.ucsf.edu) <i>students</i> Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars (postdocs.ucsf.edu) <i>students</i>
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Legal Resources (success.ucsf.edu/legal-resources) Union of Postdoctoral Scholars (uaw5810.org)
Advocacy and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars (postdocs.ucsf.edu) Associate Dean of Graduate Programs (graduate.ucsf.edu/about) <i>students</i> Assistant Dean for Diversity and Learner Success (graduate.ucsf.edu/about) International Students and Scholars Office Advisor (isso.ucsf.edu) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Resources staff (lgbt.ucsf.edu) First Generation Support Services. Services [Under the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Life] (studentlife.ucsf.edu/about) <i>students</i> Student Veteran and Military Support Services [Under the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Life] (studentlife.ucsf.edu/about) <i>students</i> Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities (studentlife.ucsf.edu/student-conduct-and-discipline) <i>students</i>



INDY: INDEPENDENCE



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* Denotes no mandated reporting requirements (they are entirely confidential)

Who's in my *Community of Magnificent People?* (COMP)
 [COMP]ensating for the support you can't solely get from your PI



Your Research Mentor

Current and past people in the lab

People at your institution

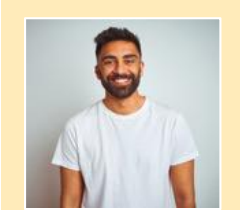
People in your field/ in your world

Power Differentials

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Next steps in your relationship

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Start



Your Framework

Prep for
Conversation

The Conversation

Post
Conversation

Start



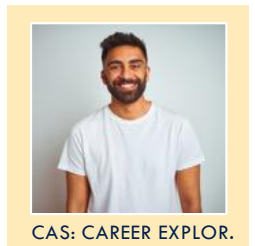
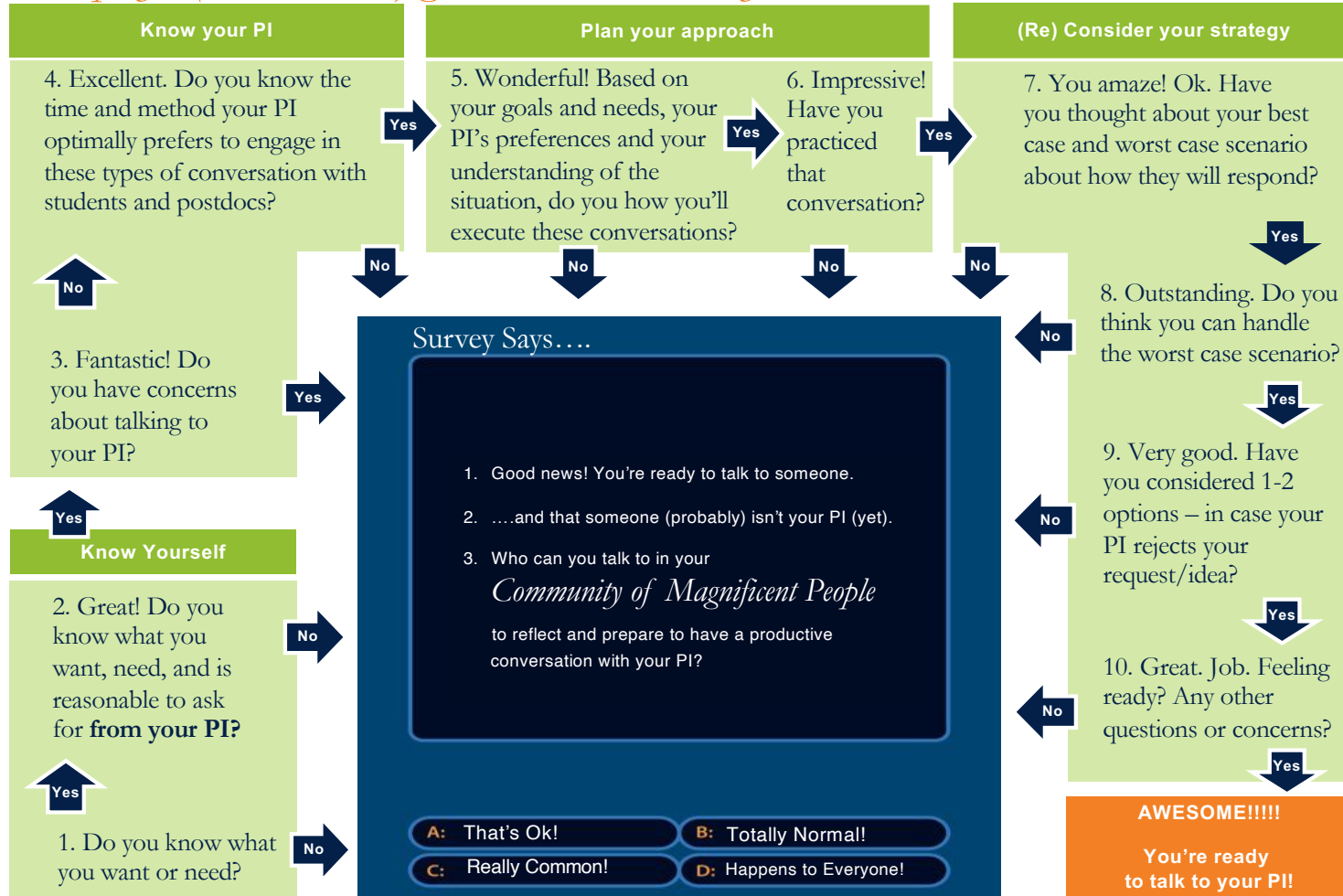
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Conversation

The Conversation

Post
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Start



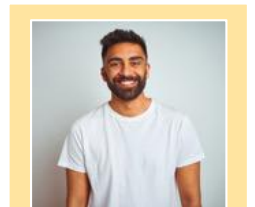
Prep for
Conversation

Your Framework

I want to talk to _____ about _____



INDY: INDEPENDENCE



CAS: CAREER EXPLOR.



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Start



Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

I want to talk to _____ about _____

Assess Yourself.

What are your *Interests* (e.g.)

1. Goals
2. Needs
3. Concerns

Assess Your Advisor/PI.

What do you think are their *Interests* (e.g.)

1. Goals
2. Needs
3. Concerns

Assess Your Approach.

Logistics: (e.g. what is the best way to let them know you want to have this conversation? The best time? The best location, etc.?)

Assess Your (Overall) Strategy.

Based on your assessment: Should you have this conversation? Are you ready, or is there something you should do, or someone else you should talk to first/instead?



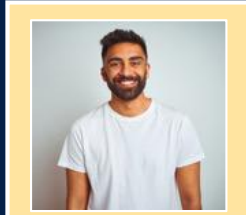
YOUR TURN. Pair up!

Take 8 minutes and begin writing down your thoughts.

Take another 8 minutes to share your prep.



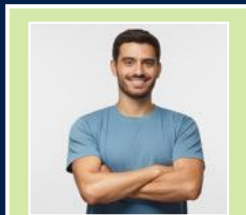
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Start



Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

I want to talk to My PI about Exploring careers

<p>Assess Yourself. What are your <i>Interests</i> (e.g.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Needs Concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals: Do an internship to explore a career path beyond academe. • Needs: I need to find out how to do this – find an internship and figure out how to juggle it with my work. • Concerns: During my interview I said I was definitely pursuing academe. I don't know how my PI will respond if I say I want something else. If they will stop investing in me. I've heard that can happen.
<p>Assess Your Advisor/PI. What do you think are their <i>Interests</i> (e.g.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Needs Concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals: To do work that contributes to the field. • Needs: They want to use the data from my project as part of their next grant which they plan to submit this year. They need me to finish current project, left unfinished by a previous student. • Concerns: I assume that they are concerned I will get off track, delay progression and they will have to support me longer. They may think exploring careers will distract me from my work.
<p>Assess Your Approach. Logistics: (e.g. what is the best way to let them know you want to have this conversation? The best time? The best location, etc.?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My PI is definitely someone who wants to talk about things quickly and then think about it. They do not seem to like surprises. • An email requesting 30 minutes to talk and saying that I would like to discuss my progress and career path might be a good idea. Then just give an overview, and explain that I would like to engage in career exploration for the next year. Talk about it briefly so I can get their thoughts on it, and then ask to talk with more details again later.
<p>Assess Your (Overall) Strategy. Based on your assessment: Should you have this conversation? Are you ready, or is there something you should do, or someone else you should talk to first/ instead?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I need to know more before I have a conversation – there are at least 3 people who have gone in the non-academic career path in my friend's lab. I should reach out to them first and find out how they did it –how they had the conversation, how they structured their time and maintained their productivity. Is there any data that shows that students who do career exploration aren't less productive? I need these details before I pitch anything to my PI.



Start



Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

I want to talk to My PI about Independence

<p>Assess Yourself. What are your <i>Interests</i> (e.g.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Needs Concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals: To identify interesting research that is viable for teaching/research institutions. • Needs: To figure out how to get my PIs to agree to what I can take from my postdoc. • Concerns: I've been trying to have this conversation for the last 3 months. Somehow we never seem to get anywhere. I feel like I'm treading water and I am embarrassed and frustrated.
<p>Assess Your Advisor/PI. What do you think are their <i>Interests</i> (e.g.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Needs Concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals: On the website: To do cutting edge research that improves people's lives. • Needs: Honestly, I don't know. That's part of the problem-I can't figure them out. So...to be productive? • Concerns: That I can't get unstuck. I want don't spend significant time working on something I won't be allowed to take, but it isn't clear I can take what I am working on. Also, everything I've done to try to get time/attention with them hasn't resulted in clear direction about what to do next re. independence. Maybe I chose the wrong person/lab? Maybe they are disappointed in me?
<p>Assess Your Approach. Logistics: (e.g. what is the best way to let them know you want to have this conversation? The best time? The best location, etc.?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm clearer about what hasn't worked: meeting regularly, telling them that my goal an academic position, meeting with an agenda with 'independence' as an ongoing topic. Somehow we're having lots of conversations, but no progress. I know that 20-minute meetings work best for them. They like me to be brief.
<p>Assess Your (Overall) Strategy. Based on your assessment: Should you have this conversation? Are you ready, or is there something you should do, or someone else you should talk to first/instead?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That isn't a reasonable question. I have to have a conversation if I'm ever going to get out of here. Obviously people have succeeded in their lab, but no one currently in the lab can give me a straight answer about how to do it. I could try to find someone who left a few years ago. I could look at the types of projects previous postdocs/now faculty worked on to get a sense of the types of projects. I could talk to the postdoc dean. I could take OCPD's Independence Course to 'force' the conversation. I could also check in with my old PhD advisor for advice. Also, I'm really tired/demoralized. I could talk to an FSAP counselor.



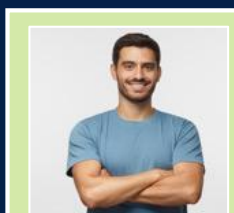
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PEARL: PERSONAL



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Start



Your Turn!

Prep for Conversation

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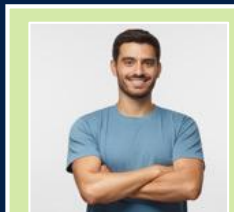
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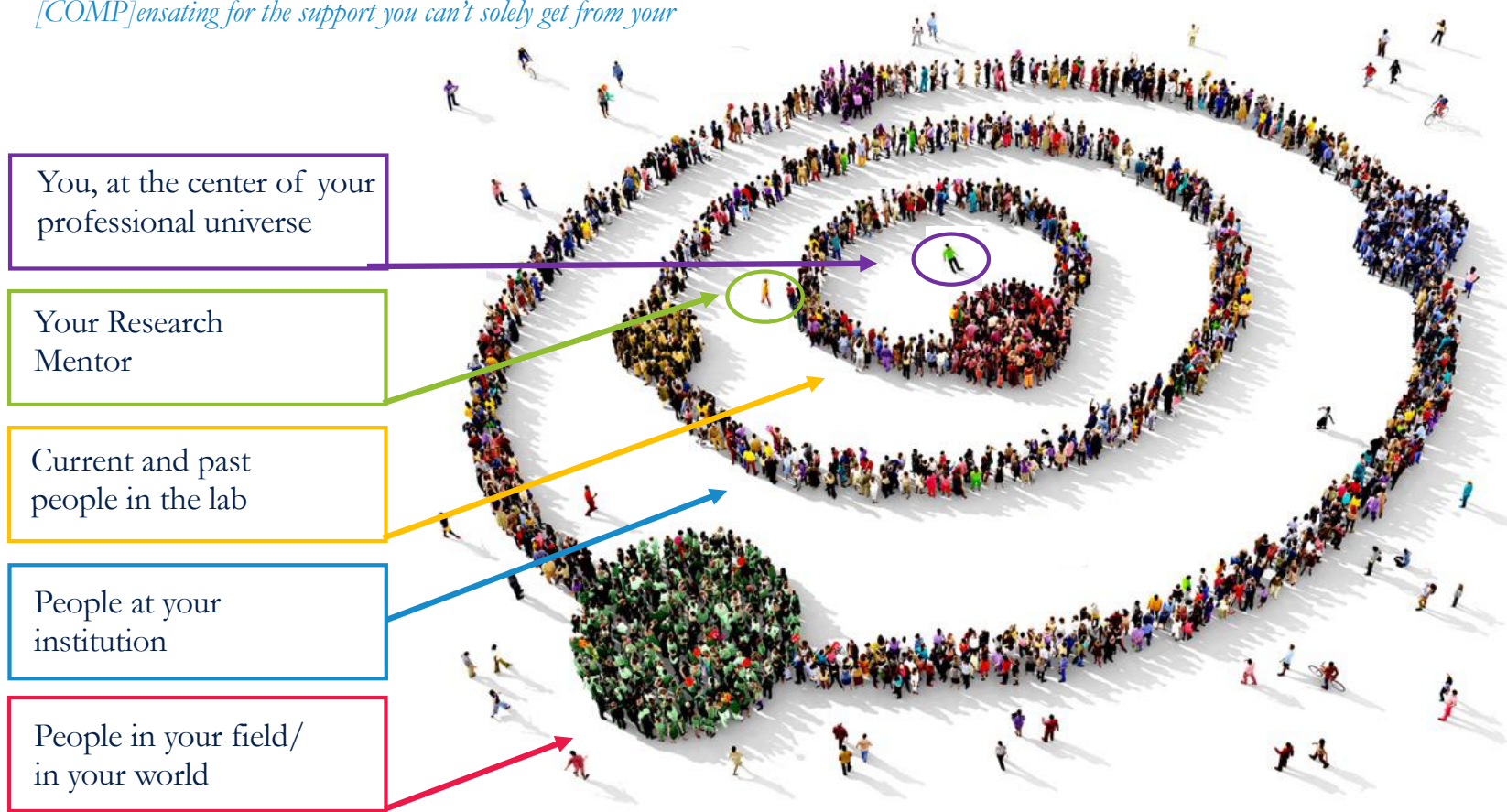


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Your Framework

Prep for
Conversation

The Conversation

Post
Conversation

You
Open

You Work
with the 'Yes', the 'No'
and the Fog (the Maybe)

You
Close

Set the
agenda
(stated your
interest)



Summarize
and
discuss next
steps

Your Framework

The Conversation

When engaging a supervisor, your open should meet 3 criteria:

1. Be clear and concise.
2. Demonstrate that you are taking responsibility for your interests (goals, needs and concerns).
3. Signal that you value their interests (goals, needs and concerns). *(this is sometimes criteria #2)*

You
Open

- Thanks for taking the time to meet. This week, my two agenda items are to update you on my progress and discuss some career development opportunities. Is there anything else you think we should cover? No? Okay.
- To start, In the last week I moved forward on 3 things.
 - First, I analyzed X data and got some interesting results,
 - Second, I began orienting Ursula (the undergraduate student) and,
 - Third, I read up on Y and Z articles that you gave me. Unless you think differently, let me start with the data.....
- ...*(I know my last item was the Carver and Jemison papers, but I see we have 15 minutes left and I want to make sure we discuss career development. Can we move those to our next 1:1 and discuss this instead? ...thanks/ok).*
- So, career development. My current thinking is the following: I am still interested in an academic career, yet I realize I want to explore career options for PhDs. There is a peer career exploration program, supported by the Grad. Division called MIND, and I would like to apply for next spring's cohort.

My goal today is to begin to discuss if there is a way to participate in the program and still meet the goal of potentially contributing my data to X paper, and achieve authorship.



CAS: CAREER EXPLORATION

Your Framework

The Conversation

When engaging a supervisor, your open should meet 3 criteria:

1. Be clear and concise.
2. Demonstrate that you are taking responsibility for your interests (goals, needs and concerns).
3. Signal that you value their interests (goals, needs and concerns). *(this is sometimes criteria #2)*

You
Open



INDY: INDEPENDENCE



- I recently learned about Dr. Laurence Clement's Academic Career Readiness Assessment tool, ACRA.
- As you may know, ACRA was pioneered at UCSF. It's a rubric designed to help trainees assess and improve their competitiveness for faculty positions. It categorizes the types and level of productivity that were essential to being selected as a candidate, according to the biomedical faculty who sat on tenure track faculty hiring committees.
- I've been using it to evaluate my own competitiveness, and have some ideas I would like to discuss with you.
- Based on ACRA, two weaknesses in my candidacy are around articulating a research vision and strategy that is innovative and viable at R/T institutions, and a lack of demonstrated teaching experience. I want to tackle research issue first.
- I know that I will need to hammer out my projects related to X grant. I will do that. But I've also generated four potential ideas that build on my research interests in Y, that could be implemented at both a PUI and R/T institutions.
- So I'm asking for two things – 1. can we find about an hour for me to pitch my ideas to you, and 2. would you be willing to review the draft of my ACRA plan and help me determine which activities would best position me?

Your Turn: Try articulating an open

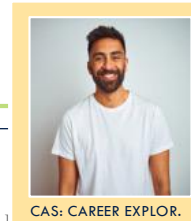
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You
Open

- Thanks for taking the time to meet. This week, my two agenda items are to update you on my progress and discuss some career development opportunities. **Is there anything else you think we should cover? No? Okay.**
- To start, In the last week I moved forward on 3 things.
 - First, I analyzed X data and got some interesting results,
 - Second, I began orienting Ursula (the undergraduate student) and,
 - Third, I read up on Y and Z articles that you gave me.**Unless you think differently, let me start with the data.....**
- ...*(I know my last item was the Carver and Jemison papers, but I see we have 15 minutes left and I want to make sure we discuss career development. Can we move those to our next 1:1 and discuss this instead? ...thanks/ok).*
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What will you learn today?

Define what negotiation is and why you will need to negotiate with your research mentor.

Assess if you're ready to engage your research mentor.

Describe steps to reflect and prep for a conversation. What do you need to know? How can you find what you need?

Articulate your 'open'. Consider different approaches to introduce the conversation.

Discuss strategies to "work with the yes," "work with the no," and "work with the fog" (the maybe).

Consider next steps to manage your relationship

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language

Your Turn: Try articulating an open

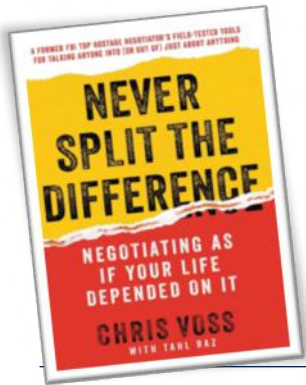
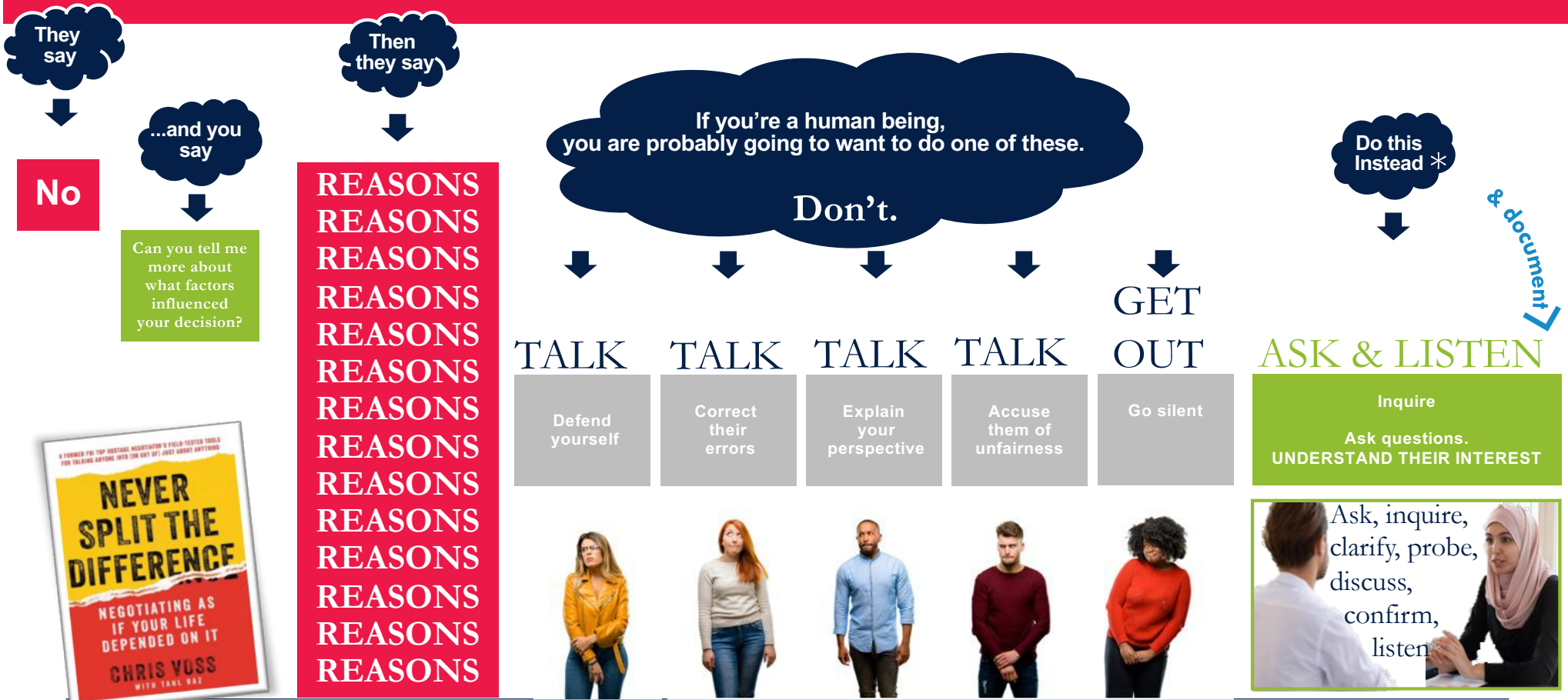
The Conversation

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Working with the no



* Unless you feel unsafe or unable. Then do this ↑

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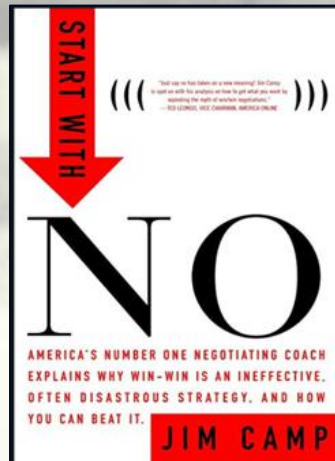
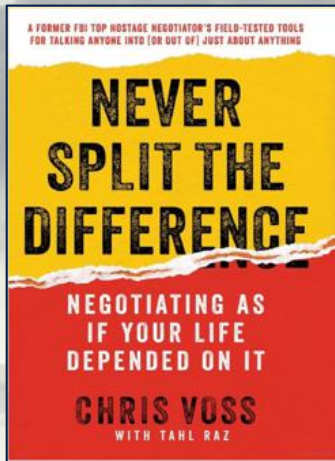
Working with the fog

Jim Camp: Deplete someone's budget. (A negotiation tactic)

Your Budget: Time 1x + Money 2x + Energy 3x + Emotion 4x

The sunken cost fallacy:
“I’ve given so much and
am so close. I can’t give up
now.”

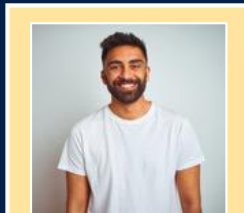
Different Cultural Norms About Negotiating



Win-Win negotiation is not a universal concept



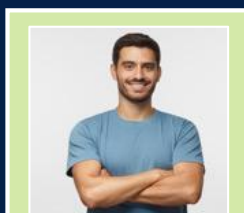
INDY: INDEPENDENCE



CAS: CAREER EXPLOR.



PEARL: PERSONAL



PETE: PROGRESSION

Working with the no (and the fog): Your Turn

ASK QUESTIONS

1. What's influencing your thinking?
2. What (other) factors shaped your decision?
3. How did you come to that conclusion.
4. What motivated you to say that?
5. Could you say more about your thinking?
6. Can you share how you're seeing the situation?
7. When did that become clear to you?
8. What concerns do you have?
9. Could you talk about some examples?
10. What level/type of performance would you need to see?
11. Can you share some examples of that?
12. How would you describe some examples of 'demonstrating commitment'? (or whatever value 'taking initiative', etc.)
13. How could I have handled this differently?

- Don't use 'why' – why makes people defensive. "Why did you do that?"
- Instead, use "how, what, when" etc,
- Whenever possible – deflect and gather more data.

USE ACTIVE LISTENING

1. I see. Go on.
2. That sounds difficult
3. That's unfortunate to hear.
4. I can see how someone would be disappointed by that.
5. It sounds like you're saying...(summarize their point) Is that right?

Signal that you value their interests

- **DON'T SETTLE FOR THEIR POSITION** (students can't do internships)
- **UNCOVER THEIR INTEREST** (I'm concerned that if a student does an internship they won't be productive and then will leave, making them a drag on my productivity)



Your Turn:

Say no.
And keep saying no.

Commitment

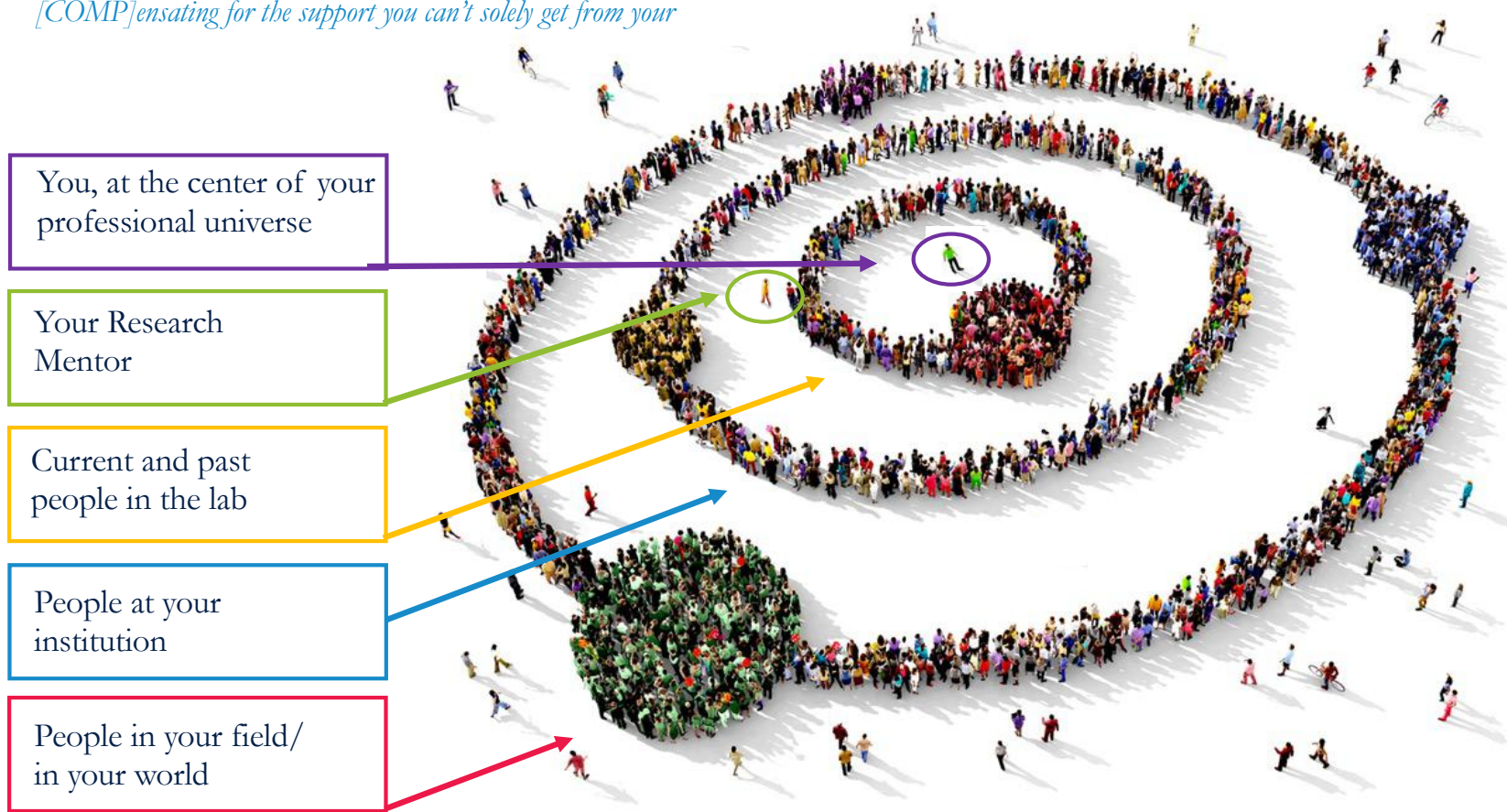
ASK & LISTEN

Inquire

Ask questions.
UNDERSTAND THEIR INTEREST



Who's in my *Community of Magnificent People?* (COMP)
[COMP]ensating for the support you can't solely get from your



Your Turn: Try articulating an open

The Conversation

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Set the agenda (stated your interest)

You Open

You Work
with the 'Yes', the 'No'
and the Fog (the Maybe)

You Close

Yes

(appreciate & celebrate)

No

(gather more data)

Fog

*(gather more data,
try to make headway to yes)*

**Your Turn –
Practice Your Close!**

Summarize and discuss next steps

- Thank you for meeting with me. It was productive.
- Based on our conversation, I will...
- To recap we will...
- I see. Thank you to taking the time to explain.
- Thank you for hearing me out.
- You've given me a lot to think about.

- My goal is to meet your expectations.
- I will take the time to consider what we talked about today.
- I am willing to do the work.
- I believe in the work.
- Can we meet again later to discuss?

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Next steps in your relationship

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language

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Student Academic Affairs

Your Turn: Try articulating an open



A supervisor's goal is to keep everyone on track



**Your negotiation
journey begins
(or continues)!**

**This is the
experience of
managing a
professional
relationship**

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You can do this!

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language

Naledi Saul, Director

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