

# Finding Your “Dream” Job

David A. Spain, MD, FACS

# Different Practice Models

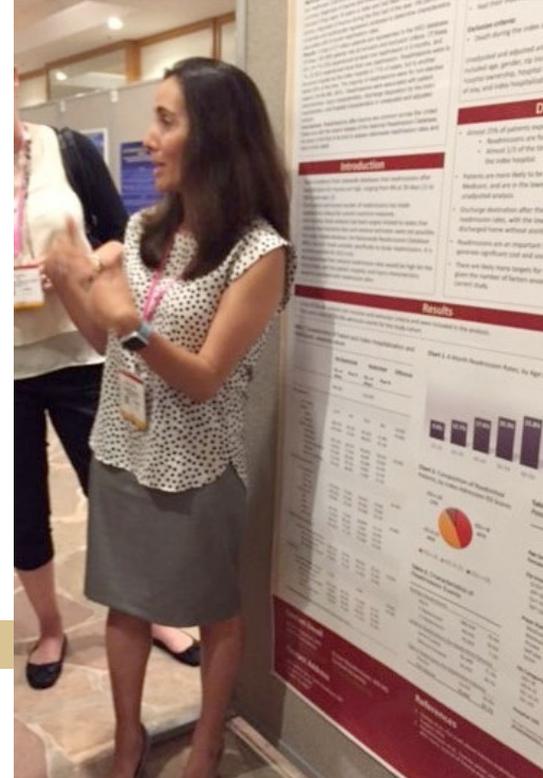
If you've seen one practice model,  
then you've seen one practice  
model...

# Different Practice Models

- Every single practice model is different
- So, I have no *answers* for you
- But, we can discuss which *questions* you need to ask yourself
- There is no such thing as a “Dream” job – but you might find a great one

# First question

- Academics or private practice?
- What is academics?
  - When most applicants say “academics” what they really mean is teaching
    - “I want to work with residents”
  - When you say “academics” I want to know what your research identity will be



# Practice Models

## Academics

- Patient care
- Research/scholarship
- Education (residents)
- Administration/service

## Private practice

- Patient care
- Institutional and/or practice service
- Teaching (hospital staff)
- Community engagement

# Questions common to both

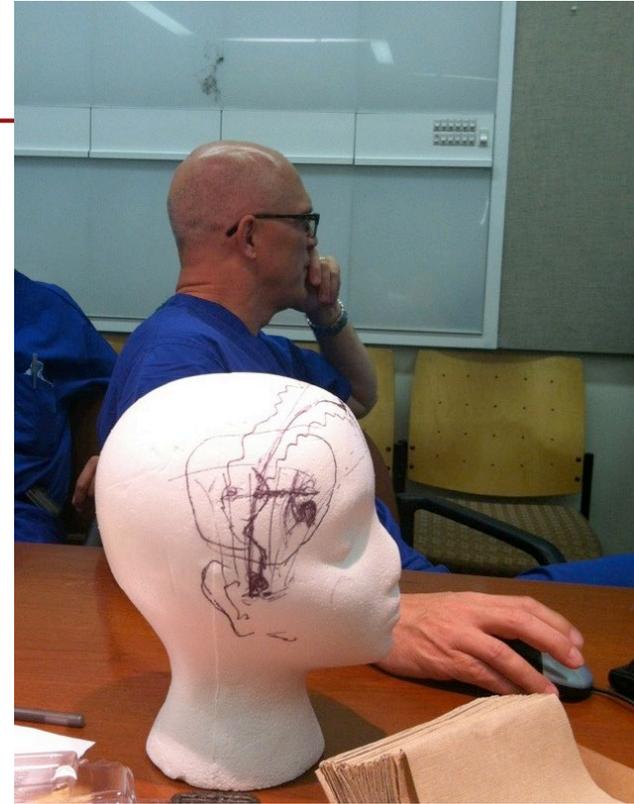
- What is the work culture?
  - Is this a team, a group or a loose association of individuals?
- How stable is the model and leadership?
- What are my opportunities for development and growth?
- How do they handle money and what's the transparency?

# Academic Questions

- What is commitment to the 3 missions (care, research and education) and how does that fit with my needs?
- How do I fit in?
- How can I contribute?
- How will I be mentored initially and then how will I be transitioned to independence (both clinically and academically)
- What is role/status of Trauma/ACS in the Dept and Hospital?

# Practice Model

- There is every kind of variation out there
- The challenge is to find the one that *best* fits your needs
  - It will not be a perfect fit
  - So, what are your core values or “must haves” that you need to be happy
  - Everything else is negotiable
- This really gets back to knowing yourself and what’s important to you



# Will give you the big picture up front:

Keys to success:

- Figure what you are passionate about and dream big
- Be organized and manage your time *actively*
- Work hard and smartly
- Put yourself in an environment to succeed
- Don't give up (i.e. don't be afraid to fail)

# Finding your focus

- Distractions more common
  - E-mail
  - Smart phones
  - Text messages
  - You are easier to find now (harder to hide in your office...)
- All of you will have some amount of LODO work to do
  - LODO = Lights On and Doors Open
  - You're gonna have to take your SICU weeks, trauma call nights, cover clinic, etc
- Most is predictable, but unexpected things will always pop up
- Question becomes: how do you use your non-LODO time?

# A few things ...

- Your boss should protect you
- Be wary of being *wanted*
  - Don't go somewhere to be *the* person that makes the program takeoff
  - Hospital, dept. or med school committees in general
  - Don't become the residents' new best friend
    - Easiest thing to do is to go to the OR
    - No one will care how many cases you did in your first few years when its time for promotion or committee appointment in societies, etc.
- Do enough to be credible – but not too much

# Finding Your Focus

- Easiest to be successful at what you are:
  - Good at
  - Passionate about
- Estimated that if you spend 20% of your time at what you're passionate about, then you'll be content with your work
- So, key step is determining what you're passionate about and how do you build that into your career
  - So how do you do that?

# Finding your focus

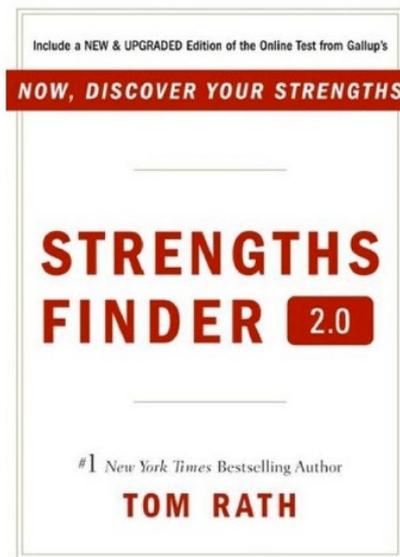
---

Your passion will be some combination of:

- Clinical care
- Research
- Teaching
- Administration

# Finding Your Focus

- Finding your passion
  - What the best part of your day?
  - What gets you excited like a little kid?
- What are you good at?
  - Most of us are not as good at some thing as we think we are ...
  - Lots of aids out there (like Strength Finder)
  - Meyer-Briggs personality tests



# MB Type Indicators

**Favorite world:** Do you prefer to focus on the outer world or on your own inner world? This is called Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I).

**Information:** Do you prefer to focus on the basic information you take in or do you prefer to interpret and add meaning? This is called Sensing (S) or Intuition (N).

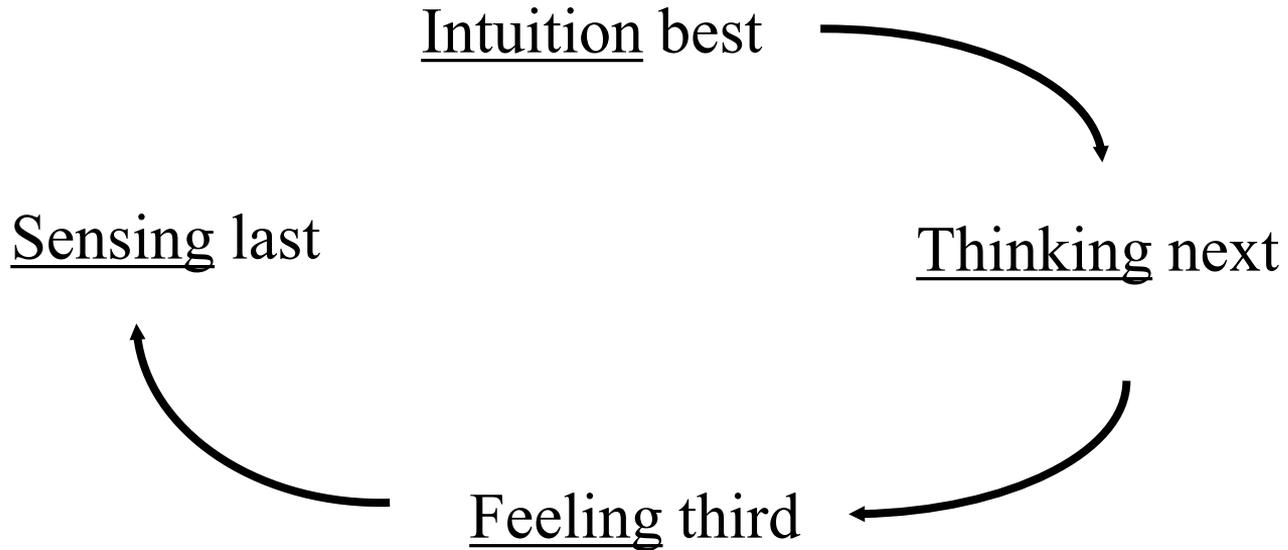
**Decisions:** When making decisions, do you prefer to first look at logic and consistency or first look at the people and special circumstances? This is called Thinking (T) or Feeling (F).

**Structure:** In dealing with the outside world, do you prefer to get things decided or do you prefer to stay open to new information and options? This is called Judging (J) or Perceiving (P).

# I am an ENTP (The Visionary)

- Quick, innovative
- Alert and outspoken
- Argue just for the fun of it (either side)
- Resourceful in solving new and challenging problems

# ENTP's decision making



# Finding Your Focus

- Step back
- Define "it"
- Use your resources
- Communicate your "it" to others
- Think in terms of small milestones

Jones Loflin, coauthor of *Getting to It*

# Define “it”

- What is *your* important thing, what matters the most to you
- Determine what gets done based on deadlines, values, available time and resources
  - Beware the “tyranny of the deadline” and the next thing due on your list
  - 2 x 2 grids can help
    - Is it important or not?
    - Is it urgent or not?

# Communicate your “it” to others

- Let your colleagues (especially your chief), family, and friends know what’s important to you
  - can support you
  - respect your time
- Also helps to let others know why *your* important thing might be important to *them*

# Think in terms of small milestones

- Keeps you from feeling overwhelmed
- Define your long range goals but focus on what you want to need to accomplish today (or this week) to facilitate your long range goals

## Career development for academic medicine—a nine step strategy

Make sure your career goes to plan by using *Linda Pololi's* innovative form of career development guidance

"Self-reflection is the school of wisdom"

Baltasar Gracian, 1601-58,  
Spanish philosopher and writer

Academic medicine depends upon talented and vibrant faculty members, but reports of difficulties in recruiting to academic posts in the United Kingdom,<sup>1</sup> and career dissatisfaction in the United States,<sup>2</sup> have led to calls for action to improve careers in academic medicine. Supporting the professional and personal development of the medical faculty is fundamental to strengthening and renewing achievements in patient care, teaching, and research.

### Mentoring

Most faculty members report a lack of effective mentoring, particularly for under-represented groups such as women.<sup>3</sup> The academic development plan (ADP) was developed by the author for use in the mentoring programmes of a designated National Center of Leadership in Academic Medicine.<sup>4</sup> The ADP was very positively evaluated by two cohorts of medical faculty who used it as part of a peer mentoring programme over eight months.

### Academic development plan

The ADP provides a coherently organised written plan for academic advancement, which recognises the aspirations of faculty members as well as the needs of the departments where they work. ADPs help faculty members to define and describe intellectual focus, clarify personal values, and long term career goals, and identify areas where skill development is necessary.

An effective ADP outlines a pathway for each professional domain (such as teaching, clinical care, research, or administration) and involves careful consideration of personal aspirations, interests, strengths, values, priorities, sources of fiscal support, current and desired roles, and programme and department priorities. Making choices that are consistent with individual values underpins the entire process. In other studies, values have been recognised as being important<sup>5</sup> but little work has focused on relating values to actions.<sup>6</sup>



The ADP can be used either individually, in a group setting, or within a mentoring dyad where trust has been established. Such a dyad could be either a traditional senior/junior partnership, or a co-mentoring relationship between peers. The process is applicable to faculty members at any stage of their career. By completing their own ADP, senior faculty members not only derive personal benefit but also prepare to facilitate the process for junior colleagues.

Outlined below is a description of each of the steps to be taken when formulating an ADP. It is important to keep a written record of each step because writing helps to clarify thinking, and serves as a record and memory aid. The ADP is a long term, evolving process that can be added to over time.

### Step one—clarify your governing values

These are the deeply held values and standards that govern all aspects of your life and which act as guiding principles for choices, decisions, and behaviours.<sup>7,8</sup> Some examples are truthfulness, enjoyment, responsibility for children, intellectual challenge, social justice, financial wellbeing, kindness, respect for diversity, freedom, and security. Typically, an individual's values are acquired through interaction with family, peers, and social systems.<sup>9</sup> In our experience of working in medical schools, most faculty members have not taken the opportunity to articulate their own governing values.

### Prepare a list of your governing values

This first critical step will build self awareness and an understanding of your values, which is fundamental to starting your ADP.

Write a list of what you value most. This first step may take a few hours. Try to find a period of uninterrupted time in a pleasant, non-work setting to do this. Try to avoid identifying what you think you should value, but concentrate instead on what's important to you. A person's values can be inferred from their behaviour, so if you are having trouble identifying your values, it may be helpful to think back to an important decision you have made and try to elucidate which values motivated you in the choices you made at that time.

Write a clarifying paragraph for each value.

### Step two—prioritise your values

These questions may help you:

- What do I value the most?
- What does my conscience tell me are the highest priorities in life?
- Based upon my experience and knowledge, what do I consider to be of greatest worth?
- If I could live by only three or four values, what would they be?
- From a long term perspective, which will have the highest reward for me—my family, friends, work, and/or profession?
- How do I wish to be remembered by my family and by my colleagues?
- What would I want others to say about me at my funeral? Write your own obituary.

### Step three—identify your strengths

It is important to identify your strengths rather than focusing on skills you do not possess (the latter can dampen enthusiasm for the process). Write down the individual strengths and abilities that have helped you to get where you are now, and identify your special talents. ▶

BMJ Careers  
Jan 28, 2006



Stanford  
MEDICINE | Surgery



Stanford  
HEALTH CARE

# Career development for academic medicine—a nine step strategy by Linda Pololi

- Step one—clarify your governing values
- Step two—prioritise your values
- Step three—identify your strengths
- Step four—consistent with your values, where do you want to be in 10 years?
- Step five—identify your one, three, and five year goals
- Step six—what skills do you need to develop to achieve your one year goals?
- Step seven—write a learning contract for each skill or task
- Step eight—involve your supervisor
- Step nine—repeat steps six and seven for your three and five year goals

<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=1446>

# Work hard and smartly

- Use your resources:
  - Most of us are good at using the residents, APPs, the team, etc. to get our clinical work done
  - Not so good at using your admins (common problem)
- Take care of your non-LODO time (this includes answering e-mails)
  - Schedule, schedule, schedule
  - Realize it will never be perfect and allow some flexibility
- Schedule time for your passion
- Schedule your family

# Pick the right environment

- What work am I being asked to do?
- Who will I be working with?
- What resources are available?
  - Within your group
  - Within the Dept
  - Within the Med School and/or hospital
- What is their culture / work environment?
- What is their “track record?”

# Clinical Focus

- This can be very challenging for junior faculty
- Some just “comes with the territory”
- I think developing a clinical niche is important
- A lot of what’s readily available ain’t sexy
  - But it has to be done
  - Can use this to build *your* worth with Dept and/ or hospital

# Research Focus

- If you're doing basic or translational research, this is usually straightforward
  - Have your grant
  - Have specific aims, etc
- If you are doing clinical research, this can be a little more challenging

# My advice for clinical research

- Find a focus
  - Topic that you are excited about
  - Topic that needs addressing
- Devote some consistent, considerable effort to that
  - No magic formula
  - Probably somewhere at least 50% of your efforts should be on that topic / area

# Resiliency

Bear in mind, if you are going to amount to anything, that your success does not depend upon the brilliancy and the impetuosity with which you take hold, but upon the ever lasting and sanctified bulldoggedness with which you hang on after you have taken hold.

-- A. B. Meldrum

# Peter Palchinsky; Russian engineer

He evolved the following principles:

- Try new things, expecting some will fail
- Make failure survivable—safe spaces and small steps
- Know when and how you failed and learn

# Don't give up

- You will stumble
- You will fail
  - Abstracts and manuscripts will get rejected
  - Grants won't get funded
  - Patients will die

Fall seven times, stand up eight.  
~Japanese Proverb

TECHNOLOGY

## An FBI Agent's 5 Steps to Developing Mental Toughness

23 years in the FBI taught an entrepreneur how to develop this indispensable quality.



BY JUSTIN BARISO *Founder, Insight*  [@JustinJBariso](https://twitter.com/JustinJBariso)

 WRITE A COMMENT

<http://www.inc.com>

# Develop emotional awareness

- Be aware of what makes you tick and your emotions
  - Learn to control them, instead of letting them control you
  - If a situation makes you angry, exam your anger
- Think about others emotions
  - Attempt to figure out their stories
  - Tailor your strategy specifically to the person or audience you're trying to reach

# Push through your limits

- Have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable
  - don't know what the future holds (especially in health care now..)
  - fear of change can lead to paralysis
- New situations force you to grow
  - Teach you to avoid becoming dependent on external sources
  - Allows you to thrive in any location or situation

# Control your mind

- We become what we think
- Negative thoughts are unavoidable, but you can refuse to dwell on them

# Focus, focus, focus

- Olympic athletes channel talent into success
  - Don't rely on luck to take home the gold medal
  - Practice with laser focus and a specific goal in mind
- But it's not just repeating the same task over and over
- Effective practice requires the following features:
  - Break down each task into individual parts
  - Spend extra time on actions you find especially difficult
  - Get feedback, and adjust accordingly (find your Carol)
  - Put your ego on the back burner
  - Keep your goals in front of you

# Pursue Growth

- Learn. Try. Repeat.
- Above all else, the mentally tough are learners
  - voracious readers
  - love to learn new things

“Mistakes are not failures. They are simply opportunities to learn.”

# 7 Ways Mentally Strong People Handle Stress

- Accept that stress is part of life
- Keep problems in proper perspective
- Take care of their physical health
- Choose healthy coping skills
- Balance social activities with solitude
- Acknowledge choices
- Look for silver lining

Business Insider Jul 2015

# Remember the big picture

Keys to success:

- Number one: have to be happy outside of work
- Figure what you are passionate about and dream big
- Be organized and manage your time *actively*
- Work hard and smartly
- Put yourself in an environment to succeed
- Don't give up (i.e. don't be afraid to fail)