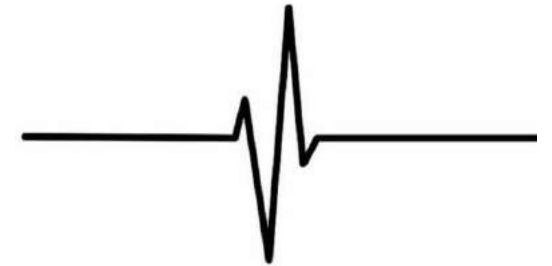


Building a healthy research culture (in my team & beyond)



The small steps in a long road!

Leanne Hodson



IF THERE ARE NO UPS AND
DOWNS IN LIFE
...THAT MEANS YOU'RE DEAD

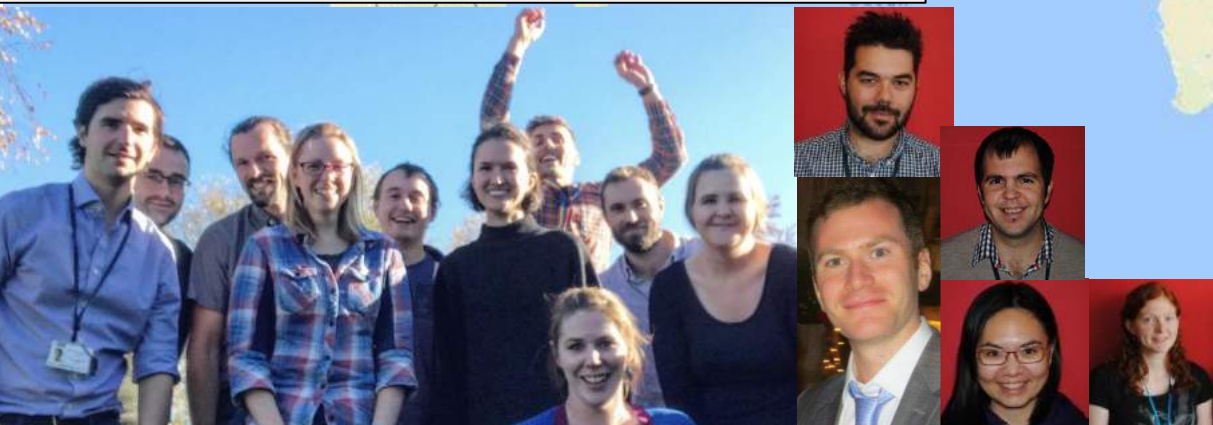


My journey



2005

Now: Professor of Metabolic Physiology / BHF Senior Research Fellow in Basic Science



2004: Career Development Fellowship (Girdlers' Health Research Council NZ)

Chair/sit on committees for Graduate Studies, Career Development Committee, Research Staff Advisory Group

Involved in rowing for over 30 years

Chair of Oxford University Women's Boat Club



Rowing and science: expectation vs reality

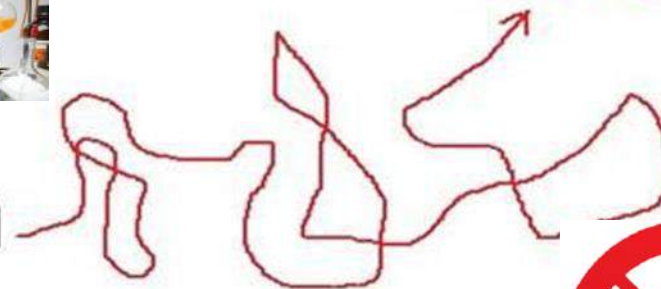
Expectations



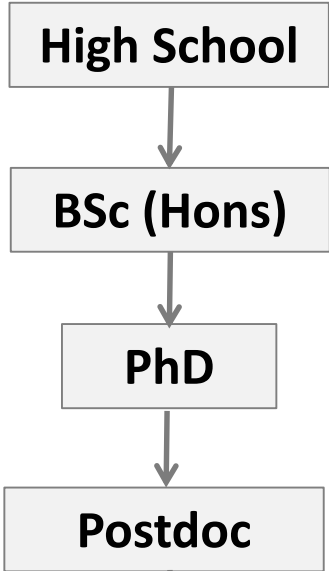
SUCCESS!



The reality!



My career path: expectation vs reality



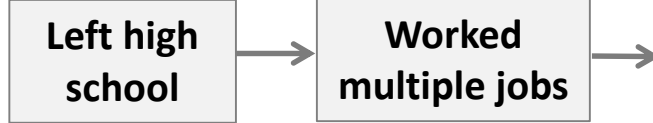
University Research Lecturer (URL)

Intermediate fellowship

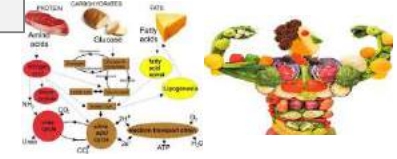
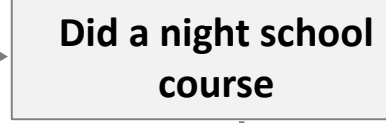
Associate Professor (A.Prof)

Senior fellowship

Professor



Worked as a teaching fellow & in a pub



Took a year out after 1st year of BSc



Did not have a 'career plan' (until 2015)

Took 2.5 y to publish my first paper from Oxford

One paper rejected 8 times – accepted on 9th submission

Grant applications: some successful and a lot not



Research and rowing: the similarities



(the things we don't talk about!)



What I have learnt from rowing

- To be part of a crew / team you need a basic set of skills & equal recognition
- Focus on the process and let outcomes take care of themselves
 - focus on what you can control, not what you can't
- Clear and constructive (transparent) communication is vital
- Respect and trust are earned & not expected (you don't have to be friends with everyone but you must respect what they bring to the boat (& treat people how you want to be treated))
- Be adaptable (conditions, crews, situations may change) & don't dwell on disappointments
- Sharing the load to work toward a common purpose/ vision is more productive (& fun)
 - Competition is best placed against other crews, not within the crew (that needs collaboration!)
- People can go beyond what they think they can with the right encouragement / support
- Small changes (& words) can have a large impact



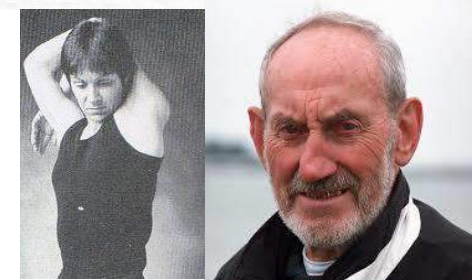
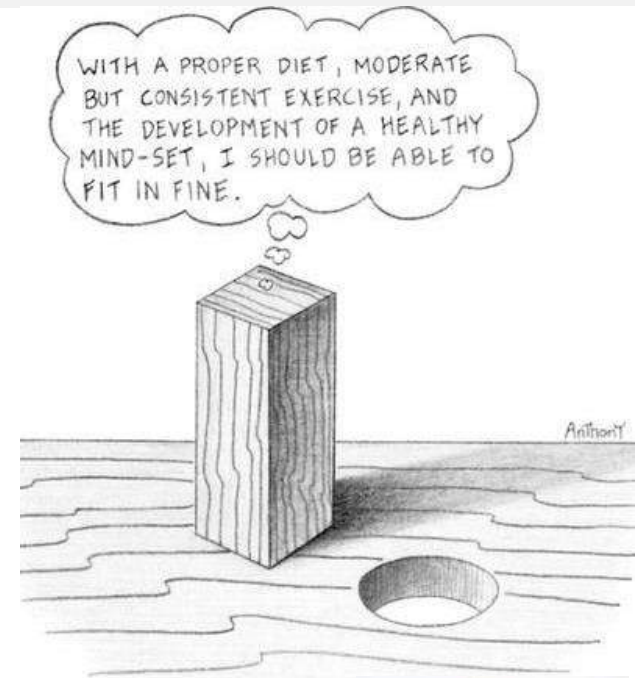
Lessons learnt from personal challenges

Self-doubt:

- wasn't clever / good enough to do a PhD / fellowships etc
- don't fit in/don't think my career is successful/feel like a fraud / failure

What I've realised:

- Good mentors are important
- Imposter syndrome is normal
- Not fitting the 'expected' blueprint makes me unique (& me)
- Being honest about experiences is important (everything can't be great 100% of the time)
- Set your own goals / goalposts → don't use other peoples
Comparison is the theft of all joy!



Small words, big impact

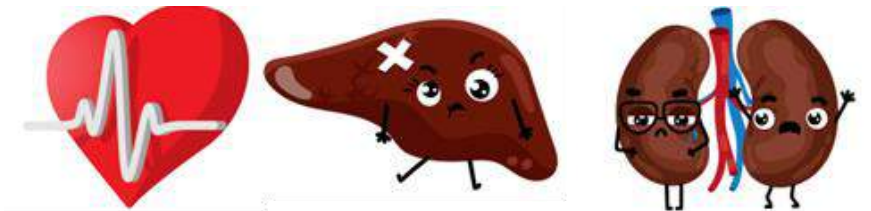
➤ Self-doubt:

- don't fit in / think my career successful / feel like a fraud / failure

Failure = lack of success (with grants, papers, experiments etc)

What I've realised:

- **No such thing as failure (only organs failure) → there are only disappointments / challenges / hurdles (& we learn from them)**



- **We spend a lot more time dwelling on disappointments (usually an outcome) than celebrating the steps in the process**

Lessons learnt from personal challenges



Academic careers are complicated, hard to navigate (& not transparent!)

Feelings of:

- Isolation, being overwhelmed, going around in circles (couldn't see where I was going and how I was going to get there)
- **What I've realised:**
 - Transparency & honesty about career progression/pathways/routes required → there is no one 'right' path or timeline
 - Be proactive and get advice! Find people who are honest, constructive and you trust & listen to what is being said (even if you don't want to hear it!)
 - Peer mentoring / support is important!
 - Yes isn't always the right answer & be prepared to take opportunities (which may feel like a risk)
 - **LIFE HAPPENS** → life makes work/careers complicated.
 - Personal life and work life overlap → can influence how you see/feel about things

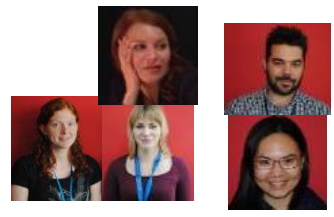


Career success ≠ personal happiness

Achievements / Success



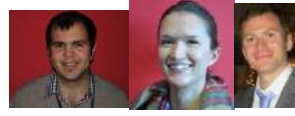
BHF Intermediate Fellowship



Associate Professor title



BHF Senior Fellowship



Funding to do more projects and expand my



Happiness / sadness



2011



2014



2015



2016



2017



Professor title



2018

Group ethos

WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER

- Individuals have their own objectives dependent upon career stages & future goals
- Clear, open, non-judgemental, respectful communication
- Recognition of expertise & appreciation of diversity
- Nobody takes themselves too seriously, are willing to share and laugh at any mistakes or mishaps
- Accommodating & supportive of each other (particularly in challenging times)

IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

- Everyone willing to help others regardless of whether they personally receive any benefit or not
- Always someone you can go to for help (regardless of how trivial the problem perceived to be)
- Proud and passionate about their work & that of others
- Enthusiastic of each others achievements and work → it's infectious, inspiring and motivational



How has this been achieved?

Know what the outcomes are (keep them in mind) but focus on the processes to get there
(as outcomes take care of themselves)

Expectations clearly set between all parties (bi/tri-directional!)

Encouraged to:

- ✓ **Keep revisiting expectations/outcomes/goals (they move)**
- ✓ **Learn to navigate disappointments, challenges & set-backs**
- ✓ **Build resilience, learn adaptability (the 24h rule)**
- ✓ **Try and keep it in perspective (life is too short!)**
- ✓ **Celebrate points in the process (the small stuff)**
- ✓ **Lead by example (feeds into the wider environment)**
- ✓ **Healthy to disagree (senior person not always right)**
- ✓ **Find solutions to problems (rather than whining about things)**
- ✓ **Talk openly about challenges, mistakes, & how it is going!**



Final thoughts

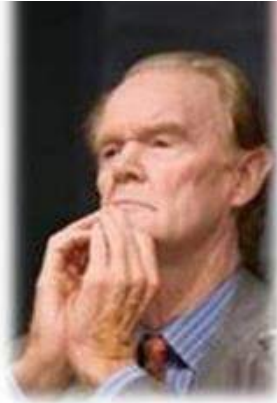


It's a process!

- ✓ on-going, takes time and can't be taken for granted
- ✓ relies on clear, constructive, transparent, communication
- ✓ built on respect & trust & honesty
- ✓ encourages people to talk (& not whinge) to others to actively pursue solutions (& have difficult conversations)
- ✓ acknowledges work and personal life overlap (make sure you give people enough time to the things that matter)
- ✓ We take responsibility for actions & words ([please stop using the word failure!](#))
 - ✓ remember it is not all about you
 - ✓ small changes can have a large impact and go beyond the smaller group
- ✓ learns from challenges, disappointments and successes
- ✓ is collaborative & not competitive
- ✓ is productive & fun!



Remembering what is important



30 second Speech by Bryan Dyson – Former CEO of Coca Cola

Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in the air. They are **Work, Family, Health, Friends and Spirit** and you're keeping all of these in the air.

You will soon understand that **work** is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four Balls - **Family, Health, Friends and Spirit** - are made of glass. If you drop one of these; they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for it."

Work efficiently during office hours and leave on time. Give the required time to your family, friends & have proper rest

Value has a value only if its value is valued

Thank you

He aha te mea nui o te ao?
What is the most important thing in the world?

He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

Maori proverb

