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MEETING ABSTRACT

A3.4

Resilience: reacting to a failing career plan

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Developing a viable career plan is crucial to achieving your goals— if you don't know where you want to go, it's unlikely you'll ever get there. However, just like most large projects frequently face cost and time overruns—think of large public building projects—your working life is unlikely to run smoothly from start to finish. What can you do when the professorship seems out of reach after long years of painful toiling? What if you feel stuck in an industry position that turns out to be much duller than the fancy job title made you believe? What if you have to react to death or sickness in your family? Or—much happier but no less challenging—childbirth? There is nothing like a development plan for resilience to such professional shocks. However, we can learn from success and failure of others, so we'll look at some case studies and try to derive general principles from them. Why does person A seem to get stronger with every challenge, while person B only derives sadness and frustration from each “cost and time overrun” in his or her life? Was the plan too challenging or inflexible, was its execution sloppy or did the “perfectionist trap” snap, in which no result is ever satisfactory?

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