



Curtin University

TAKING DOWN THE CURTAINS: A (ROUGH) GUIDE TO ENJOYING YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY

PROFESSOR JULIA RICHARDSON,
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT & MARKETING

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Enjoying your
doctoral journey
..... 'taking
down the
curtains' ...

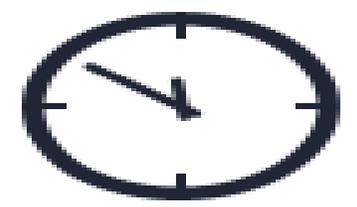
The stories you tell
yourself and your
doctoral journey...TSYTY

LIFE BALANCE AND YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY



UNHELPFUL ADVICE: MAKING TIME

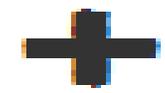
How to make time



time



sand

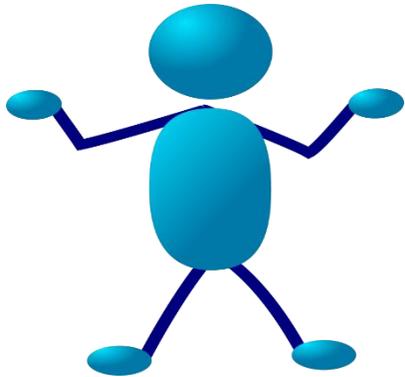


glass

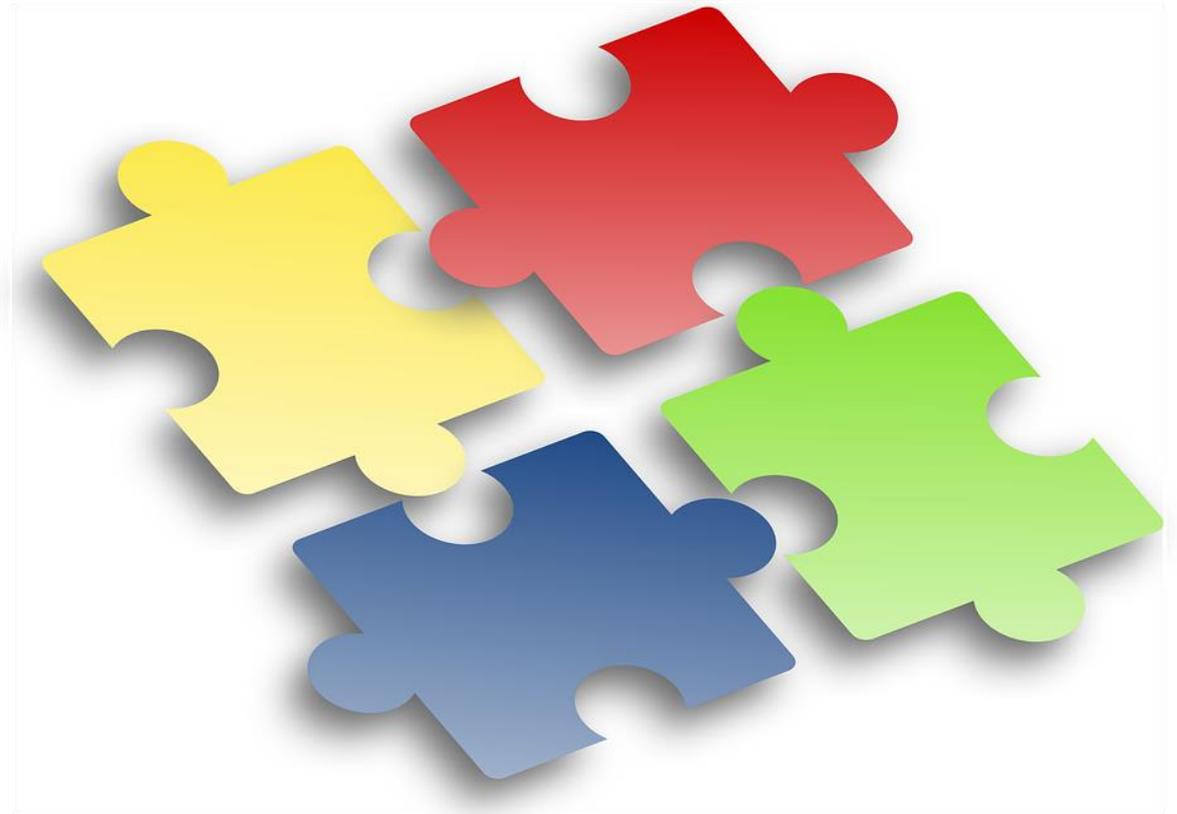
HELPFUL ADVICE: MANAGING TIME.... FOR YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY



STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING LIFE BALANCE AND YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY:

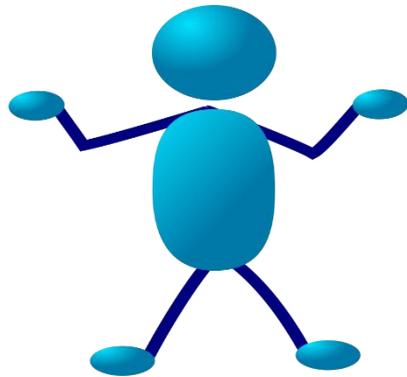


SEGMENTATION





STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING LIFE BALANCE AND YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY:

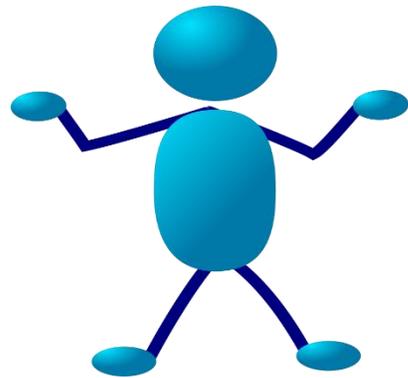


INTEGRATION





STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING LIFE BALANCE AND YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY:



A bit of both?

IMPOSTER SYNDROME/IMPOSTERISM

- **A belief that you are not as capable or adequate as others think – even though there is clear evidence that you are. (The story you tell yourself)**
 - “I must have slipped through the cracks somewhere.”
 - “I have to hide myself from everyone because I can’t let them know that I suck.” (Gardner et al, 2019)
- Relates to insecurity about your sense of self and self efficacy, success is due to luck or hard work rather than your ability and a fear that others will discover your incompetence. **(The story you tell yourself)**
- Fluctuates depending on the context you are in.



IMPOSTER SYNDROME/IMPOSTERISM IN ACADEMIA

- “In many ways, the induction of PhD students follows the model of a Jedi apprenticeship – a tough master training clueless students to continue his/her tradition.” (Bothello and Roulet, 2019, p.858).
- “I doubt that there are many professionals whose members are so relentlessly subjected to measurement, criticism and rejection as academics, exposing them to deep insecurities regarding their worth, their identity and their standing”. (Gabriel, 2010, p.769).
- “I am not an academic..... I felt like a charlatan” (Humphreys, 2005,p.846)
- Particularly common among women, very high achievers, individuals who are ‘different’ from their peers or perceive themselves to be so.

THE IMPOSTER CYCLE



(The story you tell yourself)

MANAGING IMPOSTERISM & YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY:

- Imposterism can have significant outcomes at any career stage
 - Increasing/chronic occupational stress and anxiety
 - Increasing/chronic social isolation/loneliness
 - Inhibiting the creation of professional networks
 - Limiting willingness to try new things, accept opportunities for professional development
 - Increasing/chronic burnout and lack of life balance



STEPS FORWARD: MANAGING IMPOSTERISM

- 1. Understand that imposter feelings are normal/common
- 2. Accept that feelings are not facts
- 3. Don't discount your achievements, recognize them
- 4. Seek out support from others – particularly those where caring and affirmation are not dependent on performance, i.e. personal friends
- 5. Know when and why imposter feelings surface
 - When you are new
 - When you are trying something different
 - When you are in a minority
 - When something dislodges your confidence

(The story you tell yourself)



PROCRASTINATION ON YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY:

Putting off a task because you don't believe you will enjoy doing it, because you feel you can't complete it, it makes you anxious/afraid – emotional drivers to procrastination. (TSYTY)

- Are you being realistic about the nature of the task? (TSYTY)
- Are you being realistic about what the task requires? (TSYTY)
- Have you become fixated on negative thoughts about the task? (TSYTY)
- Understand the emotional drivers behind procrastination



PROCRASTINATION DURING YOUR DOCTORAL JOURNEY: STEPS FORWARD

- Write down a hierarchy of tasks that need to be completed for your doctorate.
- Start with the 'most difficult' down to the 'easiest'.
- Maintain a group of 'easy' tasks you can do when you are feeling demotivated/tired/frustrated i.e. a set of 'easy-wins'.
- For those at the top of the list – discuss with your supervisor/friends/peers and break them down into 'bite-sized' chunks.
- Wait till you are emotionally and intellectually ready to start the 'bigger' tasks...



Looking Back:

- Things I did right



- Regular exercise biking/hiking/gym
- Didn't take on any 'extra work' I didn't really need to do e.g. no teaching during the last four months prior to submission
- Applied for scholarships/bursaries (so that I didn't have to work)
- Made the PhD my priority
- Went to conferences and 'joined in'/read other people's work/especially PhD theses
- Committed to finishing



Looking Back:

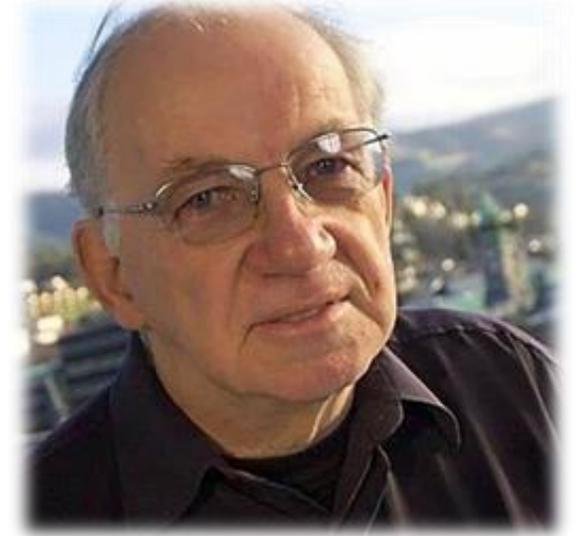
Things I wish I had done (more)....



- Talk to my supervisors more openly, addressing problems more quickly (rather than internalising/ruminating)
- Taken time away when I couldn't concentrate/focus... rather than forcing myself to stay in the office
- Found out and understood imposter syndrome and its effects
- Joined in with PhD activities/gatherings/workshops in my university
- Savoured the journey rather than focusing on the destination
- Thought more about the **story I was telling myself....**



IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR MARY MALLON



& Deepest Thanks to Professor Michael Arthur &
Professor Kerr Inkson



LAST BUT NOT LEAST: ERIC & LUCY...





References

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