

Preface

The career of a physician-scientist is an exciting and rewarding journey. It is challenging, creative, intellectual, and requires perseverance and devotion. Being a physician-scientist means you have to balance two loves – clinical medicine and research. These loves are demanding but complementary – you will be a better clinician because you are a researcher, and you will be a better researcher because you are a clinician. As a physician-scientist, you have the unique privilege of being able to make meaningful contributions in the fields of patient care, teaching, and research.

In this book, I present some of the insider tips that I have learned over the past few decades as a physician-scientist. Most of these tips I learned through experience – very little was learned in a formal manner. Reading this book will expose you to some of the strategies, knowledge, and skills that will help your career flourish. For those just starting out on this path (medical students, residents, fellows, and junior faculty members), this book will help demystify the process of becoming and succeeding as a physician-scientist.

When reading this book, you may find it long on strategy, knowledge, and skills, but short on the love of science and discovery. In my experience, new physician-scientists do not lack motivation and ideals; what they lack is the practical ability to turn their ideas into grants and papers. This book tries to remedy that issue. Please forgive my lack of emphasis on science and discovery – I take that as a given. Traditionally, the knowledge and skills required to be a physician-scientist are learned by experience. The idea behind this book is that, with a few hours of reading at the beginning of your career, you will have a much better idea of what lies ahead. This book will not give you all the answers, but it will give you a map and compass to help navigate your own unique journey. The voyage that lies before you is one of the most rewarding and meaningful that you can imagine.

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