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## NEGOTIATING WORK AND LIFE— HOW TO FIND THE JOY

### My 10 Commandments for Negotiating Work and Life

Joanne Kamens, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Addgene



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### A Little About Me

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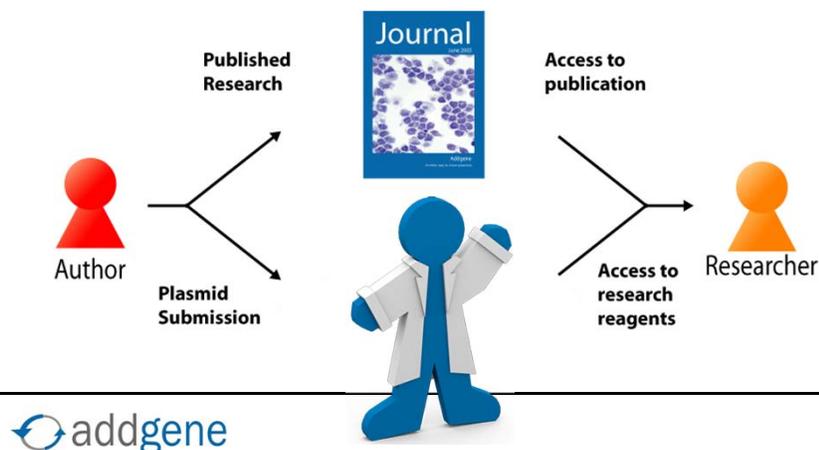
- Harvard DMS Degree in Genetics
- 15 years in Pharma (Abbott/BASF)
- 4 years in Biotech (RXi Pharmaceuticals)
- Almost 1 year at Addgene (Non-profit)
- 2 kids: Ben (MIT freshman) and Tess (HS senior)
- Founded the Massachusetts Chapter of the Association for Women in Science AWIS in 2003
- Director at Large, Healthcare Businesswomen's Association (HBA) Boston - 3 years



## Addgene Helps Scientists Share Plasmids

Non-profit, mission driven company dedicated to facilitating collaboration and sharing in the scientific community

**We fund this mission by making it easy to share plasmids!**



## Addgene Statistics

- >18,000 plasmids stored
- >180,000 plasmids shipped (not including kits) - 45% shipped to scientists outside the United States
- Samples shipped within **2 business days** of MTA approval



- Plasmids from over 1,200 contributing laboratories, from 250 Institutions worldwide
- Recommended by over 20 journals including Cell, Nature and Science

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## Benefits of a Central Plasmid Repository

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- **Time saving:** Avoid spending the day shipping out requests
- **Convenient:** Gain access to many laboratories' plasmids through one request.
- **Archived:** No loss due to turnover of lab members
- **Gain exposure:** Have new labs (outside your field) become exposed to your work
- **Standardization:** Archive historical clones and standards, rigorous QC
- **Easy record keeping:** Get a list of who has your plasmids any time (for grants or Tech Transfer offices)
- **Collaborative:** Participate in our Community!



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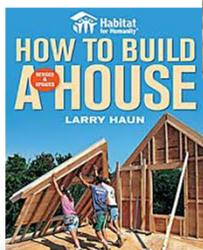
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### Lest You Think Work/Family Life Issues Won't Be on Your Agenda...

- Elder Care
- Unexpected illness (you or your partner)
- Train for a triathlon
- Find a spouse
- Buy a horse
- Kids
- ???



"What say we knock off early tonight and go to a microbrewery?"



### I Can't Make This All Better...

- But I can offer some suggestions for tactics that have worked for me, my friends and my colleagues over the years
- Bottom line: We don't **do** science, we **are** scientists so we have to figure out a way to keep being ourselves to be happy
- So here are my personal 10 commandments for making it all work



## Thou Shalt Find Enjoyment in Your Work

- If you are happy at work—you will find balance
  - If you are not happy—you probably need a new job
- If you are happy, your family will be happy
- If you enjoy working and come home happy in the evening—your friends and family will truly sense and appreciate this
- If you are miserable at home or work—your relationships will suffer in both the short run and the long run and so will work (nobody wins, least of all you)—make a change....



## Thou Shalt Sometimes Put Work Ahead of Life

- Sometimes work comes first
- That means you (and/or your spouse) won't be at every school performance, field trip chaperoning, soccer game, or whatever
  - Take turns going, that way you can have someone there clapping more often
- You want your family and friends to know you care, but that you have an important life too
- They will respect you if you show respect for your own career and it will teach them to respect their own responsibilities
- But don't miss your grandfather's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday as your mom will never forgive you...



## Honor the Work Day and Keep it Holy

- Keep a regular schedule at work
- Choose a lab/job where people have regular schedules
- Work 8-5 or 7-4 or maybe 7-6 and 8-10 whatever works for you, but most days go home at the same time. Work hard to plan your work for this
- Be realistic about goals within these bounds
  - Your co-workers will learn to work with this
  - You can work later (in that evening or in a few years) when life responsibilities are less
  - You can work at home sometimes, but carefully and with attention to those around you



## Thou Shalt Not Bear the Burden Alone

- You, alone, are not solely responsible for care and attention to your home and family unless you live alone
  - If you try to do it all alone, it should be obvious that your career will suffer (more) and there is almost no way to keep working
  - Yes, your partner can take the kids to the doctor without your help!
- Your partner is equally responsible/capable (except, perhaps for men can't actually give birth and breastfeed)
- Keeping this ALWAYS in mind will go a long way towards alleviating the guilt you should **not be having anyway** for enjoying your career and life as well as your family and friends.
  - If there is any guilt—you should be sharing it absolutely equally which means ½ of the guilt and you can handle that, right?
- This is an important topic to discuss and agree on before you get enmeshed in a serious relationship



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### Thou Shalt Not Sweat the Small Stuff

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- The house can be messy and things won't always get done, but you'll have time to read a story to your baby or run that extra 2 miles which is way more fun
- No, the towel corners don't need to match up when you fold them
- I know, easier said than done, but if you try to resist the impulse to control...you'll make progress over time



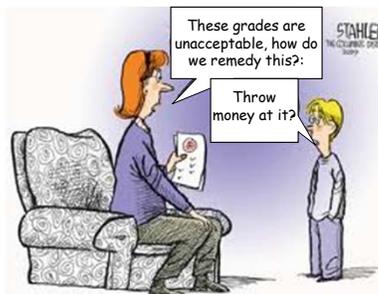
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I know you want to try and teach your partner how to do this...  
but really, don't you feel at least a little silly now for caring about this?

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## Thou Shalt Throw Money at the Problem

- If you can—pay someone to:
  - Clean your house
  - Deliver your dry cleaning
  - Make your take-out dinner
  - Deliver your groceries
  - Join Amazon Prime
  - Anything to make your life easier and to have more time with to relax and to be with friends and family



## Thou Shalt Create Community to Help

- Involve family. Create family.
- If you don't have local family to help...try to form a social circle of people in the same situation!
- Go to church, join a club, meet the neighbors...
- Create a network of support to help with elder care, carpooling, cooking on nights when you can't get home, babysitting and errands
- If you give help when you have time, you can get help when you need it



## Thou Shalt Enthusiastically Foster Independence

- Your partner can make his/her own dinner if you are going away to a conference...really, he/she will not starve
- Your children will enjoy day care and school if you tell them they will enjoy it
  - If you cry and tell them they will miss you, of course they will—try really hard not to do this, really hard
  - The sooner your kids can make a decent meal, fold their laundry, take the T, call a cab, remember their own school assignments...the better!
- A level of independence is better for them anyway
  - You will worry less about how they will handle an emergency
  - This will make you much more confident about their safety when they leave home which happens very, very fast!



## Thou Shalt Make a To-Do List and a To-Don't List

- **Prioritize!**
- Some things can wait and some things can't
  - I kiss my kids good night every evening no matter how busy I am if I am home (believe it or not, with teenagers they can go to bed and you'll never know it), but the laundry or dishes can wait
- Be ready for anyone in the family to have to miss something
  - Say no to some of those birthday parties!
  - Tell your mom you can't make dinner this week
  - One swim lesson missed can mean a world of mental relaxation
  - I actually let my daughter skip school a couple of times!
- PLAN time with your family, for yourself and for fun
- Don't forget your work To-Don't list

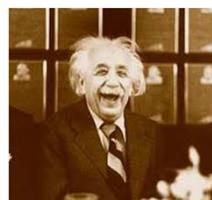


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## Thou Shalt Also Have Fun

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- I'm REALLY busy, but I go to the gym almost every morning—of course, this is more than just fun—health needs to be a priority
- Pick an area to focus on with, for example, your "volunteer" and/or fun time
  - I have done volunteer work at our temple, my kids' school, at work, with AWIS, WEST, HBA.... I try to do a really good job in one area at a time and try to mostly say "no" to other activities.
- Vacation alone with your partner
- Get a massage—no guilt
- Go to a game with the guys—no kids




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## THANKS FOR LISTENING IN

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